

BEFORE TIMUR CAME: PROVINCIALIZATION OF THE DELHI SULTANATE THROUGH THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

BY

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Abstract

The present essay examines information on the relationship of provincial settlements in the territories of the Dehli Sultanate with the capital city during the fourteenth century. This is drawn mainly from hagiographical sources in Persian rather than the much-utilized series of chronicles compiled in the city of Dehli itself. After a brief discussion of some of the factors of continuity and change operative in the fourteenth century in the territories of the Dehli Sultanate, it turns to a series of case studies, where evidence is available, of the processes of settlement of Muslim communities under the aegis of the Sultans of Dehli and in a radius extending from the capital city in northern India. The main routes of extension were to the south and to the east. Evidence suggests a process of growth of provincial centers of power to the detriment of the authority of the Sultan and the administration lodged in the capital city before the collapse of this authority in 1398. The latter part of the paper examines the linguistic consequences of the provincial political developments of the fourteenth century. It is argued that these affected changes in North Indian climates of sensibility that have endured to the present day.

L'article étudie les informations sur la relation entre les établissements régionaux dans les territoires du Sultanat de Dehli et la ville capitale durant le XIV^e siècle. Ces données sont surtout puisées aux sources hagiographiques en langue persane plutôt qu'aux séries de

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Amid learned friends who have tolerated my own old-fashioned antiquarian/empiricist and multi-disciplinary approach to the perception of history and have discussed with me details and categories of evidence, I would like here particularly to recall Professors Riazul Islam (University of Karachi), who has long shared my interest and critical approach regarding the material livelihood of medieval Indian Sufis; Gerard Fussman (College de France and Strasbourg University), who made available to me the researches of his *équipe* on the medieval *qashba* of Chanderi and was my host and guide when I came there; Shahid Amin (University of Delhi), who deepened my awareness of the Muslim presence in the rural environment of Awadh; and Aditya Behl (University of Pennsylvania) with whose views regarding the enduring 'non-communal' climate of sensibility created in northern India by the medieval Awadhi *premākhyāns* I am in substantial agreement. I am indebted to him for permission to quote the conclusion of a talk of his at the end of my own paper. I am also grateful to A.H. Morton, formerly of SOAS, who with his wide knowledge of medieval Persian sources and usage has read this typescript and suggested corrections. I am responsible for all errors.

chroniques compilées dans la ville de Dehli elle-même. Après une discussion concise de certains facteurs responsables de la continuité et du changement en vigueur au XIV^e siècle dans les territoires du Sultanat de Dehli, un nombre d'études de cas passe la revue—en fonction des témoignages disponibles. Elles traitent les processus d'établissement des communautés musulmanes sous la protection des sultans de Dehli et dans un rayon autour de la ville capitale de l'Inde septentrionale. Les principales routes d'épanouissement menèrent du Sud vers l'Est. Les témoignages suggèrent une croissance des centres de pouvoir régionaux au détriment de l'autorité du Sultan et son administration, logées dans la ville capitale jusqu'à son écroulement en 1398. La dernière section de l'article étudie les conséquences linguistiques des développements politiques et régionaux du XIV^e siècle. Il est avancé que ces changements engendrèrent des modifications dans les climats de sensibilité dans l'Inde septentrionale qui ont duré jusqu'à nos jours.

Keywords: Delhi Sultanate, Sufi hagiography, Muslim migration, regional languages

From the time of its foundation at the close of the twelfth century, the polity of the Dehli Sultanate had been subject to strong centrifugal forces. The most distant areas to which the arms of the invaders penetrated, notably Bengal, the Deccan and the extreme south of India, had only intermittently been under control by or shown nominal allegiance to the authority of the Dehli Sultans. At best these distant regions provided a welcome dispatch of specie and luxury commodities as tribute, sent to avoid the prospect of a costly visitation by the Sultan himself and the displacement of the local warrior power holders.

We may distinguish a further heartland area, bounded to the northwest by the limits of agriculture of the Panjab and the Ganga-Jamuna Doab, and extending as far south as Malwa, which provided the agricultural surplus necessary to feed the large urban population of the new capital of Dehli. Between these two extremes we may distinguish an intermediate area at some distance to the south and east of the capital in which the authority of the Sultan was maintained not only by the holders of *iqṭā'* (grants) and the garrisons to uphold their authority and to enable them to collect a portion of the agricultural surplus, but also by the continuous and increasing immigration of ethnically or socially homogeneous groups of Muslims—e.g., settlers who were bands of Sayyids or Afghans or Darveshes—emigrating to relatively small defensible settlements where they could maintain themselves against competitive neighbors (or even against the Sultan and his representatives). Of the settlements after the establishment of new nuclei of military force and organized government in the capitals of Dehli and Lakhnnavati at the beginning of the thirteenth century, some clearly originated with the armed support of the Sultan and his local grant holders. Other settlements in lands adjacent to forest cover, scrub or desert, could have been the result of group migration in search of a better livelihood, or of sedentarization and the spread of cultivation, at or beyond the peripheries of the Sultan's

power.¹ We may note the occurrence of local historical traditions of Muslim settlements in Gangetic India antedating the Ghurid conquests (Nizami 1961: 76-8; ‘Abd al-‘Aziz b. Sher Malik 1948: 8).

In the fortunes of the Sultanate of Dehli, the fourteenth Christian or eighth Muslim century was a period that does not need to be stretched or truncated for an overall survey by the historian. It is delimited by two battles that the Sultans of Dehli fought outside the walls of the capital city against invaders from Central Asia. On both occasions not only was the capital in danger of devastation, but a predictable outcome of defeat would have been the loss of military and financial control of the distant regions which contributed to the unity and upkeep of this formidable state. In the winter of 1299, ‘Ala’ al-Din Khalji repelled the Chaghatayid Qutluq Qocha in a hard fought battle (Jackson 1999: 223). In December 1398, the army of Amir Timur put to flight the Sultan Mahmud Tughluq and looted and depopulated the city of Dehli (Jackson 1999: 313).

In the fourteenth century, the sharpest change occurred in the fourth decade. Within the first third of the century, the Sultanate and notably the capital city were on a plateau of prosperity and power. This was based on remittances of precious metal to the city. This promoted the efficient maintenance of a huge army whose striking range extended to the extremities of the subcontinent and promoted a great extension of clearance and cultivation to provide for the needs of the agglomerated population of the capital.

The changing fortunes of the Sultanate of Dehli are reflected in the monetary history of the period. The phase that began in the 1290s of an enormous unhoarding (“dethesaurization”) of specie gathered from the sequential plunder of the treasure of Hindu temples and local Indian dynasties, was exhausted by the disbursements of Muhammad b. Tughluq by 1340. The surplus had been spent on raising huge armies, and on military matériel, particularly horses (Digby 1971: 35-6; Jackson 1999: 315). The loss of control of Bengal to an emerging local dynasty led to a silver famine in Dehli from the fourth decade of the fourteenth century (Eaton 1994: 41, 96; Digby 1971: 44; 1982: 96-101).²

¹ See Eaton’s analysis of conditions for the growth of the Chishti shrine of Pakpattan (Eaton 1982: 333-56).

² See the Sultan’s *muqṭā’* in Laknavati in 1339 hoarding silver *tankas* and refusing to remit them to Dehli (Sihirindi, tr. K.K. Basu 1932: 106-7); also the detail, mentioned later in this paper, that the Chishti Shaykh Siraj al-Din in Laknavati, dispatched before his death in 1357 “as a remembrance” some silver *tankas* to the author Mir Khwurd (Kirmāni 1885: 289). This shortage of silver in north India, contrasted with an uninterrupted supply in Bengal, was to endure until the sixteenth century (Eaton 1994: 95-6).

Till the end of the fourteenth century some gold—ultimately of sub-Saharan origin—continued to be received by the administration at Dehli from the maritime trade of Gujarat (Digby 1980: 129-30).

The reign of Muhammad b. Tughluq (1325-1351) was marked by the attempt to transfer the capital to Dawlatabad in the Deccan, the move—prompted by famine—of the court to Sargadwari, and his final years of campaigning in western India. These were the first prolonged absences of the ruling Sultan, his court and administration from the old capital since the establishment of the independent sultanate at Dehli more than a century before. The end of the reign saw the rise of an independent sultanate in the Deccan. During the years at Sargadwari, the famine in Dehli and the upper Doab was in contrast to the surplus agricultural production in Awadh. The process of the shifting of the balance of power away from a single capital city in the northwest southwards and eastwards to regional centers varied in pace, but was not reversed.

Muhammad's successor Feroz Shah Tughluq (1351-1388) once more established the capital and court at Dehli. There is evidence in the course of his long reign for an extension of cultivation and increased agricultural production in adjacent provinces subject to the authority of Dehli. Yet the agrarian recovery does not seem to have brought in its wake a revival of the military strength that characterized the first decade of Muhammad b. Tughluq's reign (Jackson 1999: 315). Feroz Shah was still capable of mounting long-range military raids beyond the core area of the sultanate, to Thattha, Bengal and Orissa, yielding some war-elephants and slaves but no spectacular plunder. After 1370 it became difficult to ensure the remittances from provinces under the administration of the Sultan of Dehli. In 1376 a rebellious governor of Gujarat was defeated and killed by an army sent from Dehli. In 1391 it was still possible for the Sultan to replace the next refractory governor of Gujarat by the success of a swift raid of cavalry from Dehli, but only to set in his place another who would behave in a similar fashion, the progenitor of a local dynasty that would endure for two centuries (Bayley 1886: 74-8; Sikandar b. Manjhu 1899: 4-5; Commisariat 1938: vol. 1, 46-50).³ The forces that the Sultan could muster outside Dehli in 1398 were but a "pale reflection" of what his predecessor commanded at the beginning of the century (Jackson 1999: 314; Digby 1971: 80, 82). After 1398 the assumption of authority emanating from the ruined capital city vanished. The turbulent process of the "state-formation" of the "provincial

³ This attack is parallel with the vicarious success of Akbar's two cavalry raids on Gujarat in 1572 led by the emperor himself. Effective control of the area by his central administration was only established two decades later.

sultanates" ensued, which built on the local strength of the settler communities that had grown up in the previous century.

SUFI DIASPORA

Mawās, qaşbas and dargāhs

Parallel with the campaigns of the Sultan recorded by metropolitan historians, there was a largely unrecorded growth of the Muslim presence mainly southwards and eastwards beyond Dehli by the settling of immigrant groups. There are no surviving local chronicles of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but some evidence of the processes at work has survived, mostly in local Sufi hagiographical works. To this may be added the insights found in such sources as the fourteenth- to sixteenth-century "eastern Hindi" *premākhyāns* written by Muslims in Awadh and a solitary surviving fifteenth-century *mathnavī* or narrative poem from the northern settlers in the Deccan.

Already in the thirteenth century the role of the growing settled Muslim populations in aiding the maintenance and expansion of the Sultan's authority is shown in Barani's description of Sultan Balaban's surprise raid against the refractory non-Muslim population of Katehr (later Rohilkhand) in their impenetrable mawās (Barani 1860-2: 59).⁴ The Sultan had concealed his intentions, but without previous intimation the Muslim population of Badaon (a large settlement established more than half a century earlier) was able to provide a body of armed followers (*ḥasham*), and in particular woodcutters (*tabarzanān*, i.e., "pioneers" with small axes / *tabar*) to cut a way through the jungle to the stockade of the rebellious chief.⁵

⁴ Barani seldom mentions dates, but from its place in his narrative this punitive expedition probably took place in the opening years of Balaban's reign from 1266.

⁵ Ten lines above in Barani's account there appears the ill-attested compound *tir-zan* (Barani 1862: 58-9), conjecturally translated by Elliot (1867-77: vol. 3, 106) and by myself (Digby 1971: 21) as "archer." This has subsequently been used by A. Wink to support the currently fashionable thesis of the universal utility of the "Turkish" horse-archer (Wink 1997: 93-4, n. 86). However *tir-zan* is clearly a copyist's error for the better-attested *tabarzan* ("wielder of the small axe," woodcutter, appropriately attested by a verse of the Dehli Persian poet Amir Khusraw, which occurs ten lines below in Barani's narrative; cf. *Farhang-i Anand Rāj*, the most comprehensive of the Indo-Persian dictionaries, which does not recognize *tir-zan* in this sense. Sultan Balaban's surprise attack could hardly have been kept secret if he had departed from the capital on a putative hunting expedition with 5,000 archers in his train; 5,000 pathcutters would also have been of more use than 5,000 archers in such a campaign in thick jungle.

Not many years before the time of this punitive raid by Sultan Balaban, the future great Shaykh Nizam al-Din as a young man of twenty years of age appears to have set out from the settlement of Badaon. An attractive and compassionate story in his conversations tells of a woman in the household of Mawlana 'Ala' al-Din in Badaon, who had been taken from "a *mawās* near Badaon called Katehr." She was a slave (*naw banda*) evidently captured in an earlier raid on the *mawās*, but she pined for her little son. Her master decided to release her. At this event she was taken by the Mawlana to the tank a *kos* away from settlement. "It is on the road to Katehr, and from there you know the road to your home" (Amir Hasan Dihlavi 1966: 278-9). Nizam al-Din commented that the "external '*ulamā*'" would criticize this behavior (Amir Hasan Dihlavi 1966: 254). Here we have the germs of the process of self-identification of the settlers with their Indian environment.

Another story in the conversations of Nizam al-Din shows that relations were developing between the settlers of the *qaṣba* and those who had refuge in the *mawās* nearly three decades earlier, in the reign of Sultan Iltutmish (d. 1235). Shaykh Jalal al-Din Tabrizi, travelling from Dehli to Bengal, had reached Badaon on his migration eastwards. He was sitting by the entrance of his lodging when a curd-seller (*jughrāt-firosh*) passed with a pot of milk-curd on his head. The man was from the *mawās* (forest refuge) of Katehr. The narrator remarks that there used to be brigands there and the curd-seller was one of them. The encounter led to the conversion of the curd-seller, who also offered to the Shaykh a large sum of money (100,000 billion coins), which one thinks he could only have amassed by brigandage (Amir Hasan Dihlavi 1966: 227-8).

Another anecdote of Nizam al-Din describes how in his youth in the mid-thirteenth century he set out with a companion on the highroad from Badaon to Dehli. At night there was fear not only of dacoits, but of beasts of prey (*sher*) (Amir Hasan Dihlavi 1966: 254). From this it is clear that in the middle of the thirteenth century, on the main eastern route from the great capital city, which had come into being half a century before, the forest abutted the highroad on the first stage to the major *qaṣba*-settlement of Badaon.

The subsequent picture is of forest clearance and extension of cultivation radiating from the capital city. By the middle of the fourteenth century, the strategic route from Dehli to the Deccan was cleared to an extent that it appeared to the Arab traveller Ibn Battuta to be exceptionally open and well maintained. Ibn Battuta remarked that the road was bordered by willows (?), and one would say as one passed along it that one was walking through a garden. At every staging-post (set up by the Sultan) there was all that the traveller needed (Ibn Battuta 1958-94: vol. 3, 664; Fussman 2003: I, 1, 94).

Cultivation to provide for the needs of the large population of the capital city had also led to extensive clearances in the Gangetic Doab, although areas of jungle remained, in which the peasantry could take refuge from the enhanced taxes of Muhammad b. Tughluq (Barani 1860-62: 479). To the west in the Panjab many formerly barren areas were being brought under cultivation with the aid of the "Persian wheel" (Eaton 1982: 335-56; Barani 1860-2: 566-70). We may note an assumption in a conversation dating from 1400 that forest cover could be cleared by hired labor paid in cash (Digby 2000: 226-7; Husayni 1936: 145-6). However even in the early Mughal period the extent of cultivation in the whole of northern India barely approached half of what had been brought under the plough by the beginning of the twentieth century (Mooswi 1993: 6-12). This represented a greater area than had been under cultivation in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

It is characteristic of many of the provincial communities about which we have detailed information in the Indo-Persian sources of the Dehli sultanate that, while their location is often along distant and ancient trade routes, they are populated by migrants, often immigrants from the north-west, and they largely represent an extension of settlement and cultivation, rather than the subjugation of a pre-existing urban population or of a settled peasantry. This course of extending development was often marked by and centered upon the establishment of a tomb-cult with the appurtenances of a Sufi shrine and servitors. A paradigm for it is given in the humorous tale of the tomb of the travellers' dog, as told by a prominent Sufi Shaykh of the period in the course of a long journey.

Sayyid Muhammad Gesudaraz, when he was a fugitive from the invasion of Amir Timur, was travelling from Dehli towards the Deccan with a body of companions in 1400. He related an anecdote that is a variant of a humorous tale current throughout the lands of Islam (Husayni 1936: 245).⁶ The value for us of this particular narration lies in its evocation of the developing trade-routes through the Indian countryside in the fourteenth century. In the dramatic opening sentence is one of the most sympathetic traits in the character of this great Sufi Shaykh, his sympathy and liking for animals:

⁶ There is a still current and more structured anecdote of the wandering Sufi and the tomb of his ass, which procured the offerings on which he survived, and the unknowing repetition of this course of action by his *murid*. Of this tale I have heard current oral versions noted in Anatolia by Dr. Margaret Bainbridge, and in the Gangetic Doab by Iqtidar Alam Khan. An ornate version of the tale for an anglophone "orientalist" readership is given in John P. Brown 1927: 308-22. Such tales recurring in distant locations were possibly spread by wandering darvishes (Bruinessen 1991: 21-3; Digby 1994b: 102).

There were four men who were travellers, and the fifth of them was a dog. The dog expired on the bank of water.⁷ The men said: "This poor creature was a companion to us. Let us bury him here and leave a sign, so that when we come back we may remember that this is the place where our dog (is buried)." Before they left they made a mound of earth that had the appearance of a grave.

It happened that a caravan arrived (there), who had heard that the road was dangerous.⁸ They saw the form of a grave there, and above the grave there was a tree. They thought that this was the grave of some holy man (*buzurġe*), who was buried under the tree beside the water. To that burial-place they made a vow (*nadhīr*) of a tenth of the goods of those in the caravan,⁹ that "if we travel safely, we will bring a tithe of the goods of those in the caravan for that holy shaykh."

It befell that there was dissension among the brigands and the road was clear. The caravan passed safely and they returned and came to the place. They built a dome [domed mausoleum], a mosque, a hospice (*khānaqāh*) and a stopping place (*maqāme*). This attained a reputation among people. A city was then populated there and there was a ruler (*bādashāhe*, "a king").

Some time passed, and the four men in the course of their travels came back to that waterside. They saw a populous city, and said to themselves: "There was no settlement here." They recognized the tree and the water and the site, and they were certain that this holy personage (*buzurġwār*) was not a man. It was a dog!

Their talk became public knowledge in the city, and people wanted to do something to them. (The travellers) said: "Give us a spade! Kill us if the bones of a dog do not come out!"

They dug just as they said and the bones (of a dog) came out, and the people were convinced. They told their story and were released; and the people believed that this was the case.

Saket and Yusuf Gada

We have examined the role played by the population of Badaon in Sultan Balaban's campaign in Katehr. A similar auxiliary role of the Muslim diaspora in their qashbas is implied in Yusuf Gada's ethical manual *Tuḥfat al-Naṣā'iḥ*, in which the Muslim believer is exhorted on the one hand never to enter the employment of the Sultan (a common Chishti exhortation, frequently ignored in practice)¹⁰ but also to practice riding and archery, and to be ready at any moment to take up arms against an attack by the infidels (Digby 1984).

⁷ "Ābē"; the colloquial style and vocabulary of the anecdote does not distinguish between a lake, a river, or possibly a ferry or ford. The last meaning makes good sense in the context of the narrative. Compare the old northern English usage:

I wouldna ha' crost that wan water
For a' the gowd o' Christendie.

⁸ The recorder persistently writes *kārabān* for *kāravān*.

⁹ The gift is to be implemented when they have achieved success in their object. See also the numerous anecdotes of the implementation of *nadhīr* made to Baba Palangposh (Digby 2001: 76-80, 84-9, 96, 98).

¹⁰ See also the links between Shaykh Nizam al-Din in Dehli and the garrison of Chanderi, examined below, pp. 304-6.

The case of Yusuf Gada also illustrates the close and continuing connection of the provincial qasbas with the distant capital, as well as the growing provincialization of power that was taking place after the middle of the fourteenth century. Much of the social information in his treatise can be seen as a reflection of the conditions in the capital city of Dehli, where he was clearly resident during his period as a *murīd* of Shaykh Nasir al-Din “Chiragh-i Dehli” and probably many decades later. In particular he seems to be aware of the disastrous conflict impending between Sultan Feroz Shah’s extended slave-household and the free (*aṣīl*) urban population. However, like Shaykh Nasir al-Din Mahmud, Yusuf Gada had maintained his connection with his kin in Awadh/Ayodhya, where he had been born. Shaykh Yusuf himself, despite his pen-name of “Gada” (“Beggar”), was a member of a Sufi lineage settled to the north of Awadh at Saket.¹¹

While some of the precepts that Yusuf Gada provides for his young son obviously relate to the conditions of a large urban and mercantile center, others of his dicta are more apt for a small, distant and beleaguered rural Muslim community engaged in farming. Reflection on the moral superiority of earning one’s living from cultivation of the soil is immediately followed by consideration of how to defend one’s holding from alien groups:

If you want possessions and gold for honour and prestige,
Truly know that such possessions will be burning in hell like a spark.

If you sow a field and it provides a living,
Cultivate and you will bear away abundant fruit.

The benefit of this toil is not counted in the world,
Cultivation benefits a whole world, its profit is not limited.

At no time get out of practice with bow and arrow,
Learn to swim and ride a horse, also a camel.
(Yusuf Gada, *Tuḥfat al-Naṣā’ih*; translation in Digby 1984: 116).

Buy a bow and (an archer’s) thumb-ring (and) honour your father and mother!
(Digby 1984: 101)

The enemies of the community are their non-Muslim competitors for living space, and he makes a realistic calculation of the odds at which one should engage in battle:

¹¹ The mother of a sixteenth-century *sajjāda-nishīn* of the Chishti lineage at Rapri was a descendant of Shaykh Yusuf (*Chishtīyya Bihishtīyya* cited by Sherani 1927: 54). Saket is identical with the ancient Sravasti, legendary site of the Buddha’s celestial ascent to preach to the gods.

Make war upon the Kafirs; know that this war is a duty
At such time as you can see that the Kafirs have been making a general disturbance . . .

If there are ten believers and twenty-one of the enemy
Know that the time that they show their faces is a lawful one (to fight),
O my son! (Digby 1984: 121)

Yusuf Gada's attitudes towards the Sultan and his authority not only accord with the pronouncements of Chishti sufis, but his distinctly activist tone better suits the situations of precarious communities of rural settlers, who were not averse to embarking on campaigns against their non-Muslim competitors. As a member of such a community, one should not participate in local revolts against the Sultan's authority:

Never come out against monarchs nor draw the sword against them,
Even if they do wrong,—a hundred kinds of violence and oppression.
(Digby 1984: 102)

It was also a duty of the Muslim settlers to aid the Sultan in local campaigns against rebels from his authority. This recalls the *levée en masse* of the Muslims of Badaon to aid the Sultan to punish the troublesome rebels in the mawās of Katehr in Barani's anecdote cited above:

Make war against rebels under the standard of the Sultan,
When you see anyone who has become a rebel, kill him as quickly as possible.
(Digby 1984: 118)

Yusuf Gada lays down the principle that one should avoid employment by the Sultan or his officers:

Do not yourself go near the Sultan, know that the Sultan is such a one . . .
Do not follow the King's employment; know that there is continuous misfortune in it . . .
Keep away from Mirs and Maliks;¹² know that nearness to them is deadly poison . . .
(Digby 1984: 118-9)

Khatu and Shaykh Ahmad

We have another glimpse of the military organization of remote Muslim groups of settlers in the mid-fourteenth century—in this case in central

¹² In fourteenth-century Delhi usage the term *malik* stood for a military commandant of (nominal) 1,000 horses (Al-'Umari 1961: 24, 26). Clearly it was often the *muqtā'* or *malik* of a district who furnished aid to immigrants who were establishing themselves in these rural settlements. Compare the cases, cited below, of the *maliks* who (1) presided over an archery competition at Khatu, and (2) invited Ashraf Jahangir to found the *khānaqāh* at Kichhauchha. See also the direct appeal of Malik Timur to Shaykh Nizam al-Din for a disciple to guide the garrison-settlement that he was about to establish (Kirmani 1885: 286-7; 1978: 296-7); see below.

Rajasthan—in the life story of Shaykh Ahmad of Khatu. He was allegedly born in “a princely élite family of Dehli” from whom he was separated in infancy by a dust-storm. The child was brought by a caravan of traders to Didwana.¹³ He was cared for by a weaver, and at the age of four or five years was passed on to a Sufi who had settled at Khatu. Khatu is a settlement on and beneath a fortified rocky outcrop between Didwana and Ajmer (Shokoohy 1993: 105-41). It is a crossroads on an ancient east-west trade-route between Nagaur and Bayana, passing south of Dehli and connecting Sind and Multan with the eastern Gangetic plain and central India. At the time that Shaykh Ahmad grew up at Khatu an expert archer called Shaykh ‘Ali Qayrawani is said to have come from Didwana to train the local youth.¹⁴ A competition in archery, organized by the local *malik*, was won by the future Sufi Shaykh, who in later life sometimes dressed as an archer. From the detail that the boys were trained in a pair of clay shoes fastened to the ground, it is evident that they practiced as foot-archers (Desai 1991: 17-8).

The training here described in this settlement is that of a local volunteer militia or “home guard.” By contrast, Ibn Battuta described how those who sought to be enrolled in the armies of the Dehli had their salaries fixed by a display of skills before the governor of Multan. Foot-archers were tested for the strength of bow that they could draw, and lancers and mounted archers for success in hitting targets while galloping (Ibn Battuta 1958-94: vol. 3, 607-8).

Chanderi and Mawlana Yusuf

The garrison town of Chanderi guarded the forested easterly route from Dehli to Gujarat and the Deccan, which served as an alternative to the westerly route on the farther side of the Aravalli Hills and through Nagaur. The comparatively

¹³ Then as now the lacustrine deposits of salt at Didwana (former Jodhpur state) were the major source of supply for the capital city of Dehli. In Dehli the price of Didwana salt was regulated by Sultan ‘Ala’ al-Din Khalji (Barani 1862: 310).

¹⁴ The *nisba* of the archer who trained the boys at Khatu—Qayrawani—is from the North African town with a celebrated mosque near Algiers. The Sufi at Khatu, who brought up Shaykh Ahmad, one Babu Ishaq, also had the *nisba* Maghribi (North African). This suggests a possible local migratory connection of immigrants from this distant and, in the Indian context, not militarily significant area of the Islamic world. Ibn Battuta (1958-94: vol. 4, 793) mentions other Maghribis in the lands of the Dehli Sultanate, among them one Jamil al-Din Maghribi, a physician from Granada. In Dehli around twenty-five years later Sayyid Muhammad Gesudaraz married the daughter of a Sayyid Jamil al-Din Maghribi, described as a prominent man (‘Abd al-‘Aziz n.d.: 13-4). Among military groups found in the two settlements of Khatu in the fourteenth century were the “Afghan” Sheranis, ancestors of the Sheranis of Mandasaur and Tonk (Sherani 1966: vol. 1, 19-21).

unmodernized state of this surviving Sultanate-period settlement, investigated with the resources of the French Archaeological Mission directed by Fussman, has facilitated the survey of the extent of a medieval Muslim garrison town at the front of Muslim penetration southwest of Dehli (Fussman et al. 2003: I, 1, 90-5). The bulk of the archaeological evidence reexamined by Fussman, suggests that the present town of Chanderi was a walled and fortified settlement founded or refounded by a military expedition from Dehli at the end of the first decade of the fourteenth century (Fussman et al. 2003: I, 1, 65-81).

The presence of extensive Jain monuments of preceding centuries at the deserted site of Buri Chanderi ["Old Chanderi"] a few miles away, as well as the itineraries of three medieval Muslim travellers, suggest that part of the importance of Chanderi was that it lay on a route between Gwalior and Gujarat (Fussman et al. 2003: I, 1, 70-5, 90-5). This served travellers not only from Dehli and the northwest, but also from Awadh and the east of India via Kalpi. The final stages of the route from Gwalior skirting the Betwa river lay under thick forest cover, only recently destroyed. Among medieval Muslim travellers Ibn Battuta and Gesudaraz travelled from Dehli via Gwalior and Chanderi toward Gujarat (Ibn Battuta 1958-94: vol. 4, 791; for Gesudaraz see below). Sayyid Muhammad "Mahdi" Jawnpuri came from Jawnpur to Chanderi via Kalpi in 1482 (Digby 2003b: 263-5). The very narrow agricultural base revealed by modern surveying suggests that foodstuffs must have been imported. The mid-fourteenth-century evidence of Ibn Battuta suggests that this was a flourishing trade-route. The Arab traveller describes Chanderi as "a large town with magnificent bazaars" (Ibn Battuta 1958-94: vol. 4, 791).

In the case of Chanderi, a Chishti hagiographical source sheds exceptional light on the initial pattern of settlement and the establishment of enduring links between the settlement and the capital city in the first quarter of the fourteenth century, with the simultaneous creation of a distinct local Muslim identity. In this distant region where a military presence was established and perpetuated, a link was maintained by the Sufi allegiance of the soldiers of the campaign to the great Chishti Shaykh of Dehli, Nizam al-Din.¹⁵

¹⁵ This connection of the *barakat* of the Chishti Shaykhs with the military successes of the Dehli Sultanate is at odds with the image of the aloof independence of the great Shaykhs of the Chishti lineage, which some modern writers derive from the medieval hagiographers. It may be recalled that Amir Hasan was a soldier on duty when he recorded the *Fawā'id al-Fu'ād*. For a critique of Sufi hagiographical sources and their studied omissions, see Islam 2002. For an anecdote of Nizam al-Din, told by Muhammad Gesudaraz, of Nizam al-Din at Sultan 'Ala' al-Din Khalji's own request to the Shaykh, to organize men of piety at his

Mir Khwurd in *Siyar al-Awliyāʾ*² begins his notice of Shaykh Wajih al-Din Yusuf by stating that he was one of the earliest figures to whom Nizam al-Din had entrusted authority (*az khulafāʾ-yi sābiq*). Mawlana Yusuf evidently grew up in Kilokhri, the southeastern suburb of Dehli close to the Jamuna a few kilometers away from Nizam al-Din's residence at Ghiyathpur. Yusuf himself resided in the Saray-i Dhari, which was perhaps a settlement for incomers into the capital city from the Dhar/Malwa area. This perhaps provides an indication as to why he should have been chosen by the Shaykh to accompany an expeditionary force sent into the same area. His main act of youthful piety, which was remembered when Amir Khwurd wrote four or five decades later, was his ability to traverse the distance to visit his Shaykh upon his head (i.e., performing a "handstand").¹⁶ This indicates that as a young man he had the physical stamina characteristic of so many Sufi Shaykhs. Such stamina is also demonstrated by his repeated journeys between Chanderi and Dehli in later life.

Two anecdotes of Mir Khwurd relate to the conquest and settlement of Chanderi. One of these does not mention Malik Timur by name, but states that the leader (*wālī*) for the conquest of Chanderi came to Shaykh Nizam al-Din saying that the Sultan had nominated him for a front-line post, and if Nizam al-Din would select "a friend" to accompany them, the commander and his army would be under his protection; hence victory would be certain. Shaykh Nizam al-Din accordingly sent off Mawlana Yusuf to the "domain" (*wilāyat*) of Chanderi (Kirmani 1885: 287).¹⁷ The other statement that Mir Khwurd makes about the expedition is that most of the military force (*beshtari az hasham*) of Timur and the governor (*wālī*) of Chanderi were disciples (*muridān*) of Nizam al-Din, and Nizam al-Din nominated Mawlana Yusuf for their protection/instruction (*tarbiyat*). However "this Timur" stirred up a rebellion (*shore angekht*) and all the disciples went to neighboring areas (*atrāf*) (Kirmani 1885: 286).

Mir Khwurd's brief notice provides a syncopated version of the events that had disturbed the settlers and their appointed spiritual guardian. Taking Mir Khwurd's account in conjunction with the surviving evidence from an epigraph

jamāʿat-khāna to pray for victory over the Mongols in 1299, see Husayni 1936: 160. This was evidently preceded by a previous message from the Sultan to the Shaykh as the Mongols were approaching to gather inside the city-walls all his followers then in the countryside (Hamid Qalandar 1959: 259-60).

¹⁶ By a characteristic hagiographical extension, he is also described as flying through the air on such visits from Kilokhri to Ghiyathpur.

¹⁷ *Wilāyat* has here the double sense of a region and the area allotted to the spiritual guardianship of a particular Sufi Shaykh; see Digby 1986: 62-3.

and sultanate chronicles the course of events can be conjecturally restored as follows.

Malik Timur's soldiers must have left Dehli in the first years of the thirteenth century, possibly around 1305 as part of a larger expedition against Dhar and Mandu. By the beginning of 1312, the year when a fine mosque inscription attests Malik Timur's authority, the walls of the new settlement beneath the hills and a mosque within it evidently had been constructed. At some time between 1316 and 1320 Malik Timur's title to the *iqṭā'* was abrogated by the reigning Sultan of Dehli, Qutb al-Din Mubarak and assigned to the Sultan's favorite Khusraw Khan.¹⁸ Malik Timur and his followers were driven out of the fortification, but—on this reconstruction—remained a warband in the area.¹⁹ Following the nemesis of Khusraw Khan in 1321, we find Malik Timur, with the soldier murids of the Chishtis and Mawlana Yusuf, back inside the walls of Chanderi.

We are told that if after Mawlana Yusuf became resident there anyone from that country came to profess discipleship before Nizam al-Din, the Shaykh would tell him to profess discipleship to Mawlana Yusuf in Chanderi. However, during the lifetime of Nizam al-Din, Mawlana Yusuf would not accept such professions made to himself, but would give spiritual instruction in front of the garments that had been worn by Nizam al-Din and bestowed upon him.²⁰ "Thus you should consider that the noble essence of the Sultan of Shaykhs is present" (Kirmani 1885: 287). This practice accounts for the naming of the fine Sufi *dargāh* of Chanderi as the *dargāh* of Nizam al-Din down to the present day.

It was evidently in the period of dispersal from the settlement in the reign of Sultan Qutb al-Din Mubarak that a well-disposed friend approached Mawlana Yusuf, remarking that in this country no pleasure remained. The friend had been appointed to an *iqṭā'* in Lakhnnavati (Bengal), and he would provide for Mawlana Yusuf's expenses of travel there (Kirmani 1885: 287). Yusuf remarked that he had not come into this country (Chanderi) of his own accord but had been sent by Shaykh Nizam al-Din. He would consult the Shaykh as to what to do.

¹⁸ It is possible that the latter's epithet PRWR/BRVW/BRDW in the manuscript transcriptions of Barani, despite that historian's customary obscene disparagements, represents Paramara/Pawar, a ruling clan in Malwa, which would explain the assignment of Chanderi to him. Ibn Battuta calls him "brave and goodlooking" and states that he had "conquered the land of Chanderi" (Ibn Battuta 1958-94: vol. 3, 646).

¹⁹ My interpretation of their behavior appears more logical than that of Z. Desai (1987: 7), who remarks: "Very likely there was something erratic in their temperament."

²⁰ This implies that garments had been given to Mawlana Yusuf with the earlier bestowal of authority (*ijāzat-i sabiq*) of Nizam al-Din, as well as subsequently on the latter's deathbed.

This was the occasion of Mawlana Yusuf's first return journey to Dehli. Shaykh Nizam al-Din told him that, "whether he remained in Chanderi or went wherever he wished," he was under the protection of God. Mawlana Yusuf decided that since the Shaykh had mentioned the name of Chanderi he would remain there.

Mir Khwurd mentions two further journeys of Mawlana Yusuf to visit Dehli while Nizam al-Din was still alive. These were prompted by the prospect of the demise of Nizam al-Din. This anxiety was shared by the Shaykh's other deputies "in the provinces (*aṭrāf*) such as Badaon and Awadh." On the first occasion the Shaykh was suffering from a septic or gangrenous knee. According to Mir Khwurd this was cured by Mawlana Yūsuf requesting a recital of *fātiḥa* and breathing upon it.

Mawlana Yusuf's third return to Dehli was at the approaching demise of Nizam al-Din in 1325. Once more the senior disciples (*yārān-i a'lā*) had gathered for documents or insignia of succession (*khilāfat*). A tunic and cap that had been worn by Nizam al-Din were produced and were donned by Mawlana Yusuf in the presence of the Shaykh. Alluding to the previous licence (*ijāzat-i sābiq*) Nizam al-Din remarked that this was "light upon light."²¹ Mir Khwurd concludes his notice of Mawlana Wajih al-Din Yusuf by remarking that "most of the folk" (*beshtari-i khalq*) of Chanderi were his disciples, and his grave was there (Kirmani 1885: 288; 1978: 298).

Chanderi remained constantly under Muslim control from the beginning of the fourteenth to the late seventeenth century, apart from a few years at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when factional strife led to its occupation by the Mewar ruler Rana Sanga/Sangram Singh. The agricultural base and the living-space within the medieval structures suggest that the garrison necessary to guard this strategically important route consisted of no more than a few hundred heavily armed warriors supported by light cavalry.²²

By comparison with the dearth of surviving historical or literary compositions, the architectural heritage of fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Chanderi is impressive, and testifies to the survival of a strong local tradition. The architectural ornament of the most striking monument inside the walled city, the Nizam al-Din *dargāh* at Chanderi—the foundation of Mawlana Wajih al-Din

²¹ From the *Qur'ān*.

²² Ibn Battuta comments on the 600 cavalry of the garrison at Gwalior, "who have to fight always, as this place is surrounded by infidels." Fussman (2003: I, 1, 96) argues from this reference: "Mais si Gwalior en 1340 n'abritait que six cents chevaliers, Chanderi, trente ans plus tôt, ne devait en compter guère plus de deux cents, auxquels il faut ajouter trois ou quatre fois plus de fantassins."

Yusuf—with its severely controlled lattices in such forms as the everlasting knot, in its present form may date from around 1400 or possibly earlier. It owes no obvious debt to the metropolitan styles of Dehli or Gujarat and is not paralleled by any surviving ornament at Mandu, but may derive something from the contemporary Mamluk craftsmen of Syria and Egypt. This local vocabulary of ornament survived at Chanderi, diminishing in vigour but obstinately impervious to outside influences, down to the time of the Bundela or even the Maratha rulers (personal observation, 2002).

Besides the names of prominent citizens given in the account of the travels of Gesudaraz, we have two other literary references to the settlement pattern in medieval Chanderi. According to the hagiographers of Sayyid Muhammad Mahdi Jawnpuri, one dominant group of the inhabitants of the town were the Shaykhzadas, who were the descendants of Sufi settlers, traditionally divided into eighteen families (Digby 2003b: 265). They held assignments of the agricultural land around the walled town, which yielded harvests that contributed to sustain the local urban population. Further evidence provided by Mushtaqi (1993: 179-85) suggests that the Chanderi Shaykhzadas, like other rural qashba-communities of Muslims, were trained in the use of arms and had their own supply of horses.²³ The second group comprised the soldiery of the garrison, whose constitution must have varied according to the recruiting pattern of the current military commander, whether appointed from Mandu or from Dehli. In the process of state formation in Muslim India after Timur, Chanderi passed under the new entity of the Sultanate of Malwa with its capital at Mandu. This sultanate had a mixed élite of warrior adventurers, among whom—to judge from the two successive ruling dynasties—groups from the region of Afghanistan may have predominated, Ghuris and Khaljis.²⁴

In 1482 Sayyid Muhammad Jawnpuri passed through Chanderi. Sayyid Muhammad had been a commander of the army of Sultan Husayn Sharqi. He and his band of followers had evidently been displaced when Sultan Bahlul Lodi of Dehli conquered the capital of Jawnpur (Digby 2003a: 175). Arriving with an armed and doubtless hungry retinue, and with charismatic claims that would lead to his proclamation as the expected Mahdi in a few years time, Sayyid Muhammad was not welcomed by either the Shaykhzadas or the garrison. According to his hagiographers, that night, when he looked with wrath

²³ Mushtaqi states that the Chanderi Shaykhzadas “were 12,000 *sawār* (horsemen).” Like most of Mushtaqi’s statistics this figure is probably grossly exaggerated, and differs greatly from Fussmann’s calculations of the numbers that could be supported on the basis of local agricultural production.

²⁴ Neither the inhabitants of Ghur nor the Khaljis were originally Pakhtu speakers.

from his camp (*dā'ira*) towards the town that had rejected him, flames began to ascend to the sky. This was the result of an evening of drunkenness and debauchery in which both Shaykhzadas and the garrison had participated, culminating in insults, stabbings, rapes and arson (Digby 2003b: 265).

Thirty years later the Farmulis (despite their own previous religious background as alleged Sayyids and keepers of a shrine on the route of the horse-*qāfilas*) were no more popular with the Shaykhzadas of Chanderi than the garrison from Mandu had been. According to Mushtaqi (1993: 179-85), who was a young man at this time and was probably himself in Chanderi in the service of the Farmulis, Sultan Ibrahim Lodi seized the opportunity to persuade the Shaykhzadas of Chanderi to assassinate the principal Farmuli Amir, Miyan Husayn. The subsequent collapse of confederate Indo-Afghan support for Sultan Ibrahim Lodi led among other events to Rana Sanga's occupation of Chanderi, when—in Mushtaqi's view—the Shaykhzadas received condign punishment for their treachery. A few years later similar factors led to the invitation to invade the Panjab that was extended by other Amirs of the Afghan confederacy to the Mughal Babur.

Kara and Khwaja Gurg

One Sufi biographical *tadhkira* provides evidence of the community of this important qashba of the Gangetic plain, an intersection of riverine and overland routes (Digby 1994a). Kara, with the facing settlement of Manikpur on the farther bank of the Ganga was a gathering point for enterprises directed from Dehli and the northwest eastwards into Awadh and Bengal or southwards into the plateaus of central India. From Kara, 'Ala al-Din—Khalji as local governor (*muqta'*) set out on his great raid of the treasure of the Yadavas of Devgir; and more than two and a half centuries later another governor, appointed by the emperor Akbar, Asaf Khan organized a similar raid that secured the treasure of the Gond rajas of Chauragarh (Gommans 2002: 35; Abu'l-Fazl 1902-39: vol. 2, 324-33; Khan 1977: 133). Both cases provoked similar thoughts of rebellion against the rulers of Dehli. In the late fourteenth century, Kara was a gathering point for the tribute of elephants dispatched from Bengal and Orissa to the Sultan of Dehli. Those dispatched annually from Orissa after 1359 were sent from a collecting point at Katak Banaras via Bihar to Kara (Mahru 1965: 32). The way-laying of these tribute-missions by the nascent dynasty of the Sultans of Jawnpur marked a stage in the decline of the authority of the Dehli Sultans (Digby 1971: 76; Sihrindi 1931: 156-7).

This local hagiography, *Asrār al-Majdhūbin*, provides suggestive evidence of the origin of the Muslim immigrants of the settlement. The leading family bears

the nisba Lahauri, and they had a connection, perhaps both devotional and commercial, with the Suhrawardi Sufi Shaykhs of Multan, who were major capitalists though we do not have evidence of trading (Nizami 1961: 226-7; Islam 2002: 105, 172, 226, 350). In the settlement of Kara they do not themselves appear in the role of Shaykhs. They built a lodging-house where wandering holy men, Sufi and Qalandars could stay. This was rather disrespectfully called the *ṣūfi-khāna* ("sufi house").²⁵ There is no mention that this family held any governmental post, and so it is not unlikely that a source of their wealth was from long-distance trade. This leading family of the qaṣba promoted Khwaja Gurg, a local inspired madman (*majdhūb*) in his role as spiritual protector of the settlement. Though Gurg himself was a poor orphan boy, the fact that he is invariably referred to as *Khwājā* perhaps indicates that his parents were of *ashraf* status.

Khwaja Gurg died in 1301. The author of this collection of anecdotes, which was written seventy years later, was also a member of the family. He still bore the nisba Lahawri and shows a familiarity with conditions in Multan. Khwaja Gurg had appeared to him in a dream and commanded him to write.

Khwaja Gurg when he was a youth had been initiated in the Sufi path by a Pir whom he calls Mawlana Isma'il. This was while he was on an expedition at some distance from Kara. Additional light is shed on this figure and his association with the Suhrawardis at Kara and Khwaja Gurg by the seventeenth-century Awadhi Chishti Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman ('Abd al-Rahman Chishti 1997: 919-21). Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman had visited the grave of Mawlana Isma'il, called by him Shaykh Isma'il Qurayshi, and that of Khwaja Gurg himself. There were descendants at Shaykh Isma'il's tomb and residents (*mujāwirān*) at that of Khwaja Gurg, which 'Abd al-Rahman had visited in 1637-38.²⁶ 'Abd al-Rahman states that Shaykh Isma'il was the "brother or brother's son" of Shaykh Baha' al-Din Zakariya (first of the lineage of great Suhrawardi Shaykhs in Multan, died around 1267-8). Shaykh Isma'il was buried at a place four kos (15 kilometers?) to the west of Ilahabad (Prayag).²⁷ Mas'ud 'Ali, Khwaja Gurg's principal patron in Kara itself, was also a murīd of Khwaja Baha' al-Din in Multan.

²⁵ Such *Qalandar-khānas* were characteristic of Central Asian Sufi establishments (Digby 1998: 154 and n. 114).

²⁶ It is well maintained by representatives today (visited by the author in 1995).

²⁷ The name is corrupted in both sources. Likely forms are Nahroli or Bharoli.

The Lahori and Multani connections of the settlers—like the youthful activities of Shaykh Ahmad of Khatu surveyed above—seem evidence of the enduring importance of a west-east trade-route from the Indus to the Gangetic plain, which passed through Rajasthan via Nagaur, Khatu and Bayana. Travellers between Multan and Karra are more frequently mentioned than those from Dehli, again emphasizing the importance of this east-west route. There are also references to visitors from the town of Awadh/Ayodhya and from Bengal.

In Kara the authority of the capital city of Dehli was not always favorably regarded. According to this source, Khwaja Gurg consigned a cloak (*khirqā*)—a form of legitimation of spiritual authority from the capital city—sent by the great Chishti Shaykh Nizam al-Din to a distilling oven (*bhati*) (Digby 1994a: 104). The cloak is said to have been brought to Kara by Akhi Siraj al-Din (for whom, see below). Here also Shaykh Nizam al-Din, despite the tradition of Chishti aloofness, appears in the role of propagator of the authority of the capital city. On chronological grounds this improbable anecdote can be rejected as spurious. A mendacious account is given of the murder of Sultan Feroz Shah Khalji of Dehli on a boat in the river near the town, which seeks to absolve his nephew the local governor, ‘Ala’ al-Din Khalji from all blame. The latter’s rise to the throne is predictably attributed to the *barakat* of Khwaja Gurg (Digby 1994a: 105; ‘Isami 1948: 229).

Khwaja Gurg’s role is that of a protector of the settlement against nuisances and dangers, from evil spirits, snakes and scorpions and troublesome visitors (Digby 1994a: 104-7). One of Khwaja Gurg’s poems, recited on a suitable occasion at a local boys’ school, testifies to the growth of local sentiment:

I am content with dry bread and vegetables;
My appetite is not for roast meat and lamb.
Dehli and Samarqand and Bukhara and ‘Iraq,
You can take them all and leave me Kara (Digby 1994a: 103).

In contrast to the major and far-ranging military raid on Devgir which ‘Ala’ al-Din Khalji mounted from Kara, the *Asrār al-Majdhūbīn* provides evidence of two small-scale raiding expeditions by inhabitants of Kara against the local population west of the junction of the rivers Ganga and Jamuna.

According to an account that is told in his own words, Khwaja Gurg as an orphaned youth of sixteen or eighteen years took part in a raiding party from Kara against the Kafirs at a settlement some distance away. In this territory he encountered a *ṣāhib wilāyat* (a Sufi Pir with claims of territorial authority) called Mawlana Isma‘il. The latter then directed him towards his task in life “whatever it is to be.” This was revealed by an appearance of the legendary Khwaja Khizr in a cave on a nearby hill. He was instructed to go back to Kara and drink “the wine that is reprobated by people” while serving as a spiritual

protector of the *qaṣba*.²⁸ The *Asrār al-Majdhūbīn* adds that he was engaged in these tasks until the day of his death.

The second raid was upon the same locality (Bharoli/Nahroli) and was evidently some decades later, after Sultan ‘Ala’ al-Din’s progress in 1295 from governing Kara to ascending the throne of Dehli. It is related that Khwaja Gurg was seated when a man came and told him that the fеоffee of Kara (called *shiqqdār* and *muqṭa’* in the text), called Malik ‘Abd Allah had sent his respects and made a request. For nearly ten days he had been entangled at Bharoli and Mhauwa(?). There was no decisive victory and the population put up a stiff resistance. “On our own side” twenty or thirty men had been killed and others wounded. Sultan ‘Ala’ al-Din (we are told) had advised Malik ‘Abd Allah to resort to Khwaja Gurg in cases of difficulty. The Khwaja, after weeping and acknowledging that the burden was upon himself, bade the messenger go and tell Malik ‘Abd Allah that there was a victory and two thousand captives had been taken. This occurred before the messenger had reached the Malik, the enemy having fled in terror at Khwaja Gurg’s name (Muhammad Isma’il Lahawri, f. 21r). Perhaps the most interesting detail of this inflated account of a rural razzia is the mention of 2,000 prisoners being taken. This item of information and the Persian term used—*barda*—suggest that a portion of the mercantile prosperity of Karra was based on slave-raiding, which would supply the needs of the capital of Dehli or of the lands of Islam beyond the frontiers of the subcontinent.

Such armed expeditions of the inhabitants of Kara into territories evidently continued over a long period. Early in the sixteenth century, the emperor Babur noted that the population of “thirty or forty villages of Kara and Manikpur” were employed in elephant trapping. The context of Babur’s remarks makes it likely that this was in expeditions south of the Ganges and Jamuna, near Kalpi and farther east (Babur 1922: 488).

Kara was a frontier town and, besides the details we have quoted, the signs of a rowdiness of behavior of its inhabitants are apparent. Liquor shops in the town are mentioned in the anecdotes with the non-Muslim names of their owners Bhola and Bande (Pande?) (Digby 1994a: 104). Their premises had other patrons besides the Khwaja himself. A practicing ground for archery at the outskirts of the settlement is the setting for one anecdote. As I have argued elsewhere, rough and “marginal” communities are disposed to choose wilder holy

²⁸ ‘Abd al-Rahman maintains that Khwaja Gurg received education (*tarbiyat*) from Shaykh Isma’il, but the earlier source suggests a single brief epiphany, marked by the presence of the legendary Khwaja Khizr.

men, with whom they perhaps feel temperamental affinity, as the spiritual protectors to whom they profess devotion (Digby 1998: 151).

Lakhnnavati and Akhi Siraj al-Din

Bengal is mainly beyond the limits set to this essay, but the development of a sultanate of Bengal had an effect upon the evolution of society on the eastern frontiers of the territories of the Sultans of Dehli. All of the southeastern territories within and beyond the control of Dehli were thought of by the inhabitants of Dehli as “Hindustan.” In the narrative below no distinction is made between areas where the Sultan of Dehli exercised continuous authority, and Lakhnnavati/Bengal that merely lay under the threat of a punitive visitation of the Sultan. In the fourteenth century the lands to the southeast were an area growing in relative importance, where Muslim settlers and their dependants were clearing some of the great area of forest cover and extending cultivation, and were deriving profit from the extension of trade routes between Bengal and northwest India. The example of the evolution of society in Bengal during this period, in the concessions which—it is argued—the dominant class of Muslim invaders made to local power-groups and in the early emergence of a new literary tradition of vernacular poetry may have exercised an influence on the development of these traits in Awadh (Eaton 1994: 50-70). A parallel to the Ahir tale of Lorik that led to the first startling literary achievement in the Muslim settler communities of Awadh (see below) perhaps exists in the older “popular ballads” of Bengal, which in D.C. Sen’s (1920: 61, 66) analysis lack traces of “Pauranik revivalism” and neo-Brahmanical caste exclusiveness. Sen would date the origins of these ballads to the period before the suppression of Buddhism.

One can see an immediate political background to the attempt, in the third decade of the fourteenth century, to extend the influence of the Chishtis in Dehli to Bengal. The survival after 1421 of Mawlana Yusuf as adviser to the new garrison town of Chanderi in Malwa may have suggested to some of the more influential frequenters of the *jamā‘at-khāna* of Nizam al-Din, or to the Shaykh himself the possibility of sending an envoy to Bengal.²⁹ The departure of Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq on his expedition to subdue Lakhnawati may also have suggested the desirability of extending the influence of the Chishti *dargāh* there. This course of events is suggested by the sequence of Mir Khwurd’s narrative,

²⁹ Nizam al-Din at this time was old and infirm. The behavior of his steward, Khwaja Iqbal, was often contrary to the Shaykh’s instructions (Islam 2002: 116-8). The senior disciples (*yāran-i-a‘lā* in this account) probably exercised demanding and competitive influence.

where the notice of Mawlana Yusuf, the envoy to Chanderi, is immediately succeeded by that of Akhi Siraj al-Din, who departed to Bengal. It is implicit in Mir Khwurd's account, though not openly stated, that Akhi Siraj was selected for the task—as was Mawlana Yusuf—because he was an inhabitant of the region. Mir Khwurd was Akhi Siraj's contemporary and classfellow at the *dargāh*, and in this case his narrative lacks tales of miraculous powers displayed by the youthful devotee whom Mir Khwurd had known as a friend.

The title by which Siraj al-Din was known when he arrived at the *dargāh*—"Akhi" (Ar. "My brother")—initially suggests a modest socio-religious status, and nothing in Mir Khwurd's account contradicts this; but it also is an Anatolian Turkish term for a leader of a guild of young men, and may indicate that this boy who had travelled from Lakhnnavati to Dehli, like the Maghribis in the Dehli territories, was of recent immigrant stock from the lands of the Mediterranean (Ibn Battuta 1958-94: vol. 2, 418-20 and n. 27). Mir Khwurd explains that he was one of the "friends from Awadh and the land of Hindostan" who joined Nizam al-Din's service, and the Shaykh himself pronounced that he was "a mirror of Hindostan." This statement has been taken by a recent commentator to mean that he "thoroughly associated himself with the north Indian Chishti tradition" (Eaton 1994: 85). But the remark is made after the little stranger, then at an age when "his beard had not begun to grow," had arrived at the *dargāh* in Dehli from Lakhnnavati. We have noted above that in fourteenth-century Dehli usage "Hindostan" was used as a term for the Gangetic lands to the southeast, Awadh and beyond (cf. Sahrindi 1931: 150-1). The meaning of the Shaykh was that the youth was "a real easterner." As seen by Mir Khwurd in Dehli, Lakhnnavati (Bengal) was little more than an extension of Awadh.

After professing his devotion we are told that Akhi Siraj was nourished in the company of the friends who were servants (*mulāzim*) of Nizam al-Din. After this every year Siraj al-Din would go to Lakhnnavati to see his mother and then come back. Thus alone and free of cares (*farighu'l-bāl*) he passed his life in a corner of the *jamā'at-khāna* (common hall). He had no possessions but his book(s) and paper, which he kept in the hall.

So when some "friends of high rank" (*yārān-i a'lā*) drew up a list for *khilāfat* for the Shaykh whose end was approaching, they included the name of Siraj al-Din.³⁰ The Shaykh remarked that the first qualification in this work was learning (*ilm*) and Siraj al-Din did not possess much of that. The aged Mawlana

³⁰ One may note the contrast between these *yārān-i a'lā* and the *yārān-i mulāzim* who performed menial tasks about the *dargāh*.

Fakhr al-Din Zarradi replied that in two terms of six months he would make him into a man of learning (*dānishmand*).³¹

So this senior figure at the *dargāh*, who had written a treatise on the lawfulness of listening to singing, settled down to teaching Akhi Siraj the set books of the instruction of Muslim students, in one case preparing an abridgement which he named after his pupil. The course was also attended by the future hagiographer Mir Khwurd. When Akhi Siraj reached a competent standard, Shaykh Nizam al-Din appended his sign-manual to the *khilāfat-nāma* (document of succession). Before he set out for “Hindostan,” Akhi Siraj sent off the document for safekeeping to Shaykh Nasir al-Din in Awadh—perhaps another indication of the process of “provincialization” that was taking place (see below).

When Shaykh Nizam al-Din “strolled to the head of paradise” (i.e., he died), Akhi Siraj stayed three more years in the *dargāh* at Dehli, but when the urban population was being dispatched (by Sultan Muhammad Tughluq) to Devgir, “by good fortune” Akhi Siraj went to Lakhnnavati. For purposes of study and disputation he took with him various trustworthy books that were *waqf* (a religious bequest) from the library of Nizam al-Din, and the garments that Nizam al-Din had bestowed on him for special occasions. Siraj al-Din “adorned that country (Lakhnnavati) with his beauty, and began to give his hand for profession of allegiance, so that the kings of the country came into his discipleship.” At the end of his life he sent as a remembrance some silver *tankas* to a former teacher and to the author.³² He made a grave for himself in the old town of Lakhnnavati, and in it he interred with all honor some of the garments of Nizam al-Din that he had taken with him, making a cenotaph over them. When he was dying he willed that he should be buried at their foot (Kirmani 1885: 288-9).

Writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries with clear historical and geographical perspectives, ‘Abd al-Haqq of Dehli and ‘Abd al-Rahman Chishti of Awadh, suggest that Nasir al-Din Chiragh-i Dehli and Akhi Siraj were the two most important *khalifas* or heirs of the authority of Nizam al-Din, as it was from these two that the major Chishti Nizami lineages had descended in later times. For this symbolic reason, ‘Abd al-Rahman suggests, down to his own day Nasir al-Din and Akhi Siraj were mentioned first and last in the recollection (*dhikr*) of Nizam al-Din’s *khalifas* (‘Abd al-Haqq 1309/1892: 86; ‘Abd al-Rahman Chishti 1997: 888-9).

³¹ The mention of two terms suggests that the speaker was taking into consideration the fact that the annual journey on foot from Dehli to Lakhnnavati would take several months.

³² For the scarcity of silver in Dehli the mid-fourteenth century, and the dependence of the northern capital upon remittances from Lakhnnavati, see above.

Akhi Siraj was not an exceptionally long-lived Sufi Shaykh. The date of his death has been given as 758/1357 (Ghulam Sarwar 1914: vol. 1, 358).³³ At his death his authority passed to a senior Chishti Shaykh, ‘Ala’ al-Haqq “Ganj-i Nabat” Lahori, who had been in the territory of Lakhnnavati before Akhi Siraj was despatched from Dehli (Ghulam Sarwar 1914: vol. 1, 368-9). From the son of the latter the “Khurasani” immigrant Sayyid Ashraf Jahangir, received the Chishti *khirqā* (cloak) at Pandwah, capital city of the Bengal Sultans. It was the fourteenth and last investiture of the cloak of a Sufi lineage that he received. This was the prelude to a stately reversal of Ashraf Jahangir’s direction of travel, back west with a train of many horses and camels to the newly emerging capital of Jawnpur; and to his setting up of a historically influential *khānaqāh* on a suitable site in eastern Awadh.

Kichhauchha and Ashraf Jahangir

The process of acquisition, at the end of the fourteenth century, of an appropriate territorial base on the southeastern route through Awadh by a Sufi Shaykh and his migrant followers is vividly described in *Laṭā’if-i Ashrafī*, the hagiography of the peripatetic Sufi Shaykh Ashraf Jahangir (Digby 1970).³⁴ Sayyid Ashraf Jahangir shared with Sayyid Jalal al-Din “Makhdum-i Jahanian” Bukhari of Uch the distinction of being a Sufi with a base in the Indian environment who continued to travel very widely in other lands of Islam.

In the second half of the fourteenth century, before Ashraf Jahangir took his final leave of his Pir, Shaykh ‘Ala’ al-Din Ganj-i Nabat Chishti at Pandwa in Bengal, the latter showed him in a vision where his tomb would lie.³⁵ What Ashraf Jahangir saw was a circular lake with a small hill within it, and he was told that he would be buried upon the hill.

Ashraf Jahangir then left Pandwa and came to Jawnpur. With his followers Ashraf Jahangir travelled northwest through Awadh, but he did not find the

³³ Ghulam Sarwar gives him the nisba Badauni, which plainly is incorrect. ‘Abd al-Rahman, who in general in his notices cleanses irregular patterns of behavior, suggests that Akhi Siraj had spent many years in the *jamā’at-khāna* of Nizam al-Din. This clearly goes against the sense of Mir Khwurd’s narrative of the arrival of the youth from Lakhnnavati and the fact that the latter was his classfellow.

³⁴ For a sketch of the life and some of the travels of Sayyid Ashraf Jahangir, see Ernst and Lawrence 2002: 78-81.

³⁵ The *Siyyar al-Aqtāb* has a similar account of the Prophet at Medina displaying to Mu’in al-Din the city of Ajmer amid its hills. Each vision is a notable evocation of the Indian landscape, sanctified for local Muslims by the Sufi presence (Ilah-diya Chishti 1877: 124; Digby 1986: 73).

place that he sought until he came to Bhadod. At Bhadod one Malik Mahmud was the local landholder.³⁶ This man waited upon Ashraf Jahangir and showed him much kindness, and he accompanied the Shaykh in his search for the place that he had seen in his vision.

Then there came into view a circular tank. When he saw it, the Ashraf Jahangir said that this was the place that his Shaykh had revealed to him. Malik Mahmud suggested that though the situation was agreeable, as it had water on all four sides of it, there was a difficulty. A Jogi resided in the place, and Ashraf Jahangir could only settle there if he had the power to confront this Jogi.

Ashraf Jahangir pronounced: "The truth came and falsehood perished! Lo! Falsehood perished! What is difficult about driving out a body of unbelievers?" He then ordered a servant to tell the Jogi to depart from there. The Jogi sent back a reply that he had five hundred disciples with him. If any man could oust him by spiritual power, so be it! But to make him leave would be no easy matter.

Now there was one man who on that very day had become a disciple of the Shaykh. He was called Jamal al-Din Rawat.³⁷ The Shaykh told Jamal al-Din to go forth and give an answer to the Jogi's display of powers. When Jamal al-Din hesitated to do this, the Shaykh called him close and took some pān out of his own mouth and with his hand placed it in Jamal al-Din's mouth. When Jamal al-Din ate the pān he was overcome by a strange exaltation. Bravely he set out for battle. He came to the Jogi, and he said: "We do not think it becoming to give a display of miracles (*karāmat*). Nevertheless we will give an answer to each of the powers (*istidrāj*) that you display!"

The first trick that the Jogi showed was that columns of black ants advanced from every direction towards Jamal al-Din: but they vanished when Jamal al-Din looked resolutely towards them. After this an army of tigers appeared, but Jamal al-Din said: "What harm can a tiger do to me?" At this all the tigers fled. After this the Jogi threw his staff into the air. Jamal al-Din then asked for the staff of Shaykh Ashraf Jahangir, and threw it into the air. The Shaykh's staff

³⁶ This account of Ashraf Jahangir's establishment of a *khānaqāh* at Kichhauchha is unusual in depicting the helpful collaboration of the local Muslim powerholder in the area. The description of the island in a lake on which the tomb of Ashraf Jahangir was subsequently built leaves no doubt that the site is identical.

³⁷ The epithet Rawat (>Rajaputra) conveys a claim of local ethnicity or "belonging," indicating a member of a former dominant "autochthonous" kinship-group whose power has usually been overlaid by the conquest of a more recent invading "Rajput" group. This anecdote is also an early instance of especial claims being allotted to Indian Muslims of indigenous rather than immigrant descent.

beat down to the ground that of the Jogi.³⁸ When the Jogi had exhausted his tricks, he said: "Take me to the Shaykh! I will become a believer."

Jamal al-Din took the Jogi's hand and brought him and made him prostrate himself at the feet of the Shaykh; and the Shaykh instructed him in the words of the profession of faith in Islam. At the same time all the Jogi's disciples became Muslims and they made a bonfire of their religious books. The Shaykh gave the converted Jogis a place upon the banks of the lake, and he prescribed austerities and spiritual exercises for them according to his own path.

After this Ashraf Jahangir commanded the Darvishes to bring their baggage. He allotted places to all his followers so that each could build his separate cell (*hujra*).³⁹ In the space of a few days Malik Mahmud built a *khānaqāh* for the Shaykh, and he made his own children and servants profess themselves disciples of the Shaykh. The Sayyids of the neighborhood also came to visit and gave their allegiance. Within three years the bare ground was transformed into a bed of roses.

The Shaykh gave the place the name of Ruhabad (Abode of the Spirit), and he gave to the *khānaqāh* the name of Kathratabad (Abode of Multiplicity).⁴⁰ He prophesied that the place would be a great light in future ages, and that great men of their day, "Men of the Unseen" (*rijāl al-ghayb*), and many saints of God would visit there and acquire merit.⁴¹ The tomb of the Shaykh is in the middle of the lake (Yamani *Latā'if*: 23, Ms Lindesiana: 679, Manchester: ff. 369-70; private MS: 543-5; Urdu tr. Karachi 1962: vol. 1, 45-7; Kichhauchha 1997: V, 26-31).

From this hagiographical account we see how a suitable site of previous local sanctity was acquired, with the aid of a local Muslim who was apparently a grantholder of the Sultan, by a display of superior charisma and an accommodation with the group of Jogis who were previous inhabitants of the site. The

³⁸ Compare the role of the slipper in the anecdote of Mu'in al-Din at Ajmer (Ilah-Diya Chishti 1877: 130). Here however the contest is a symmetrical one, of "missile" against "missile."

³⁹ In a number of other *tadhkiras* descriptions of the communal effort of building a *khānaqāh* are to be found (Digby 2001: 127-8).

⁴⁰ The description of the island in a lake on which the tomb of Ashraf Jahangir now stands and the settlement of Kathratabad on the bank of the lake, where there were lodgings for his numerous followers corresponds to the present layout of Kichhauchha Sharif (in 2004). The area of the expanse of the waters of the lake has diminished and the rocky hill on which the tomb stands is now connected to dry land.

⁴¹ The "Men of the Unseen World" frequently figure in Indian Sufi anecdotes. They are usually identified with the *abdāls*, members of an invisible hierarchy who govern the world (Digby 1986: 62).

establishment of this territorial base at Kichhauchha in eastern Awadh did not put an end to the Shaykh's extensive travels through the lands of Islam. The leader of the Jogis, now given the name of Kamal, accompanied the Shaykh on some of his travels, and the Shaykh felt a sympathetic transfer of pain from the Jogi to the Shaykh is recorded on a winter night at Shirvan north of the Caspian Sea, when Kamal Jogi was in danger of freezing to death (Yamani, *Lindesiana* Ms: f. 89v; Karachi 1962: vol. 1, 81-2).⁴²

Malik Mahmud, the local magnate who had aided and encouraged Ashraf Jahangir in the founding of the *khānaqāh* at Kichhauchha was not forgotten by the Shaykh in the course of his travels. On his return to Kichhauchha, Ashraf Jahangir presented him with a suitable rarity, a glittering stone that relieved thirst and weariness (Yamani *Latā'if* : 37; Kichhauchha 1997: vol. 6, 36):

Hazrat (Ashraf Jahangir) related: When we reached the mountain of al-Fath, we came across a band of darvishes, who had set foot on the path of trust in God (*tawakkul*), and for thirty years they had remained constant in this path. Among them was an elder called Shaykh Abu'l-Ghayth, who was their leader. He gave (me) a stone, the glitter of which surpassed any jewel, and he related its countless qualities.

One of its particularities was that if any traveller bound it in his waist, however far he travelled on the road, he would not grow tired. If he placed it in his mouth when he thirsted, he would be refreshed with water. Likewise when he hungered, he would be sated. In this manner he related many such properties of the stone. Hazrat (Ashraf Jahangir) to satisfy him accepted the stone from him.⁴³ When (Hazrat) returned to Ruhabad [Kichawchha], he gave it to Malik Mahmud.⁴⁴ Some of his companions asked him regarding this, and he replied that it was suitable for the Malik.

Though there are many parallels, both in India and in other areas of the Muslim world to this anecdote of a miraculous contest with previous non-Muslim incumbents resulting in the establishment of a Sufi *khānaqāh*, the later fourteenth-century date and the setting in Awadh, together with the emphasis on the successful accommodation with a community of Nathapanthi Jogis are perhaps indicative of a development that took place within the next few decades in this area, hundreds of kilometers away from metropolitan capital of Dehli. This is the development of a new genus of literature that has exercised an influence on north Indian sensibilities and perceptions that endures to the present day.

⁴² An anecdote of this Jogi's cat is translated in Digby 2000: 227-9.

⁴³ The phrase recalls similar anecdotes of "the Philosopher's stone" (*sang-i parās*) offered to Sufi Shaykhs, usually by Yogis (Digby 2000: 230-1).

⁴⁴ The original Muslim patron of Ashraf Jahangir's settlement at Kichawchha in eastern Uttar Pradesh.

It will be of no surprise to students of the location of rural Sufi *khānaqāhs* that Sayyid Ashraf Jahangir's new establishment was located along the eastern or *prācya* route that connected Bengal to northwestern India and beyond (cf. Gommans 2002: 17).⁴⁵ Ashraf Jahangir, probably some decades later but before the close of the fourteenth century despatched an extensive present to the Shaykhs of Chisht in Khurasan (modern west Afghanistan north of Herat) that included Indian textiles, golden lamps and vessels described as manufacture of Bengal (*'amal-i Bangāla*) and eunuchs evidently obtained there.⁴⁶

It is possible that further stages of the route to "Khurasan" passed south of Dehli. One may detect a growing hostility to the authority of Dehli among Shaykhs now established in eastern India. As we have seen, Ashraf Jahangir had gained his Chishti *khilāfat* in Bengal. The *khānaqāh* had also been founded on the Shaykh's return from travels in Bengal.

Collective biographies of rural Sufi Shaykhs who were established in Awadh before the end of the fourteenth century reveal a variety of not strictly religious preoccupations. Lineages connected with Shah Mina of Lakhnau, among them the Shaykhs of Qidwa—ancestors of a family influential in twentieth-century Indian Congress politics—were often preoccupied with the development and extension of their agricultural holdings, often at the expense of their neighbors (Kamal 1995).

The Deccan and Sayyid Muhammad Gesudaraz

More than is the case in the previous century, one is struck by the elasticity and resourcefulness of behavior of fourteenth-century Sufi Shaykhs, who had assumed some of the characteristics of the soldiers and armed citizenry with whom they associated.

Sayyid Muhammad Gesudaraz was born on 4 Rajab 723/8 July 1323. He was taken from Dehli to Dawlatabad in the Deccan when he was five years old. Gesudaraz subsequently stated that his father with his whole family set out from Dehli on 20 Ramazan 728/13 July 1328. Sultan Muhammad Tughluq was sending qāfila after qāfila to Dawlatabad.⁴⁷ The journey lasted more than four

⁴⁵ For the importance of older *khānaqāhs* like that of Shaykh Farid at Ajudhan as staging posts, see Digby 1986: 171-5.

⁴⁶ Inventories in *Maktūbat-i Ashrafi*, BM/BL Ms Or. 267, Letters 64, 64, folios 120r, 121r. For the trade in eunuchs from Bengal, see Polo 1921: vol. 2, 115.

⁴⁷ The precise dates given by Gesudaraz seem to preclude any possibility that Gesudaraz exaggerated his own age. This mention by Gesudaraz of the continuing process of dispatch of the urban population to the Deccan is confirmed by the variant recension of Barani, Bodleian Ms, ff. 191r-192r; private Ms, f. 160r-v.

months. We are told that in old age Gesudaraz could still describe the stages and encampments. They arrived at Dawlatabad on Thursday, 17 Muharram 729/26 November 1328 ('Abd al-'Aziz 1367/1948).

Gesudaraz returned to Dehli shortly before his sixteenth birthday. At this time he appears to have survived an attack of an epidemic, brought by Muhammad b. Tughluq's army from Motupille on the Andhra coast (Husayni 1936: 293-4).⁴⁸ For many decades Gesudaraz resided at Dehli, attempting to gain recognition as a major Chishti Shaykh. His reminiscences reveal that this pursuit of holiness did not prevent him from borrowing a horse from an acquaintance in the Sultan's *paegah* for an outing to the north of the triple city of Dehli. In the course of the day he was pursued by dacoits, but he outrode them and came back safely within the city walls (Husayni 1936: 188-9).

This swiftness of response did not desert him in old age. When Sultan Mahmud Tughluq and his wazir Mallu Khan confronted Amir Timur on the plain west of the triple-city, tidings reached Gesudaraz inside the city that the battle was going against them. Then aged 77 solar years, Gesudaraz gathered a party about seventy strong (probably not counting the women and children) and left by the Bhilsa (southern) Gate of the city some hours before Sultan Mahmud and Mallu Khan fled.⁴⁹ The aged Shaykh had the foresight and powers of organization to leave the city before the roads were blocked by other fugitives. This was on Tuesday 17 December 1398.

The party led by Gesudaraz regrouped and acquired provisions at the first villages along the right bank of the Jamuna along the Mathura road, and then headed for Gwalior, where a senior disciple of the Shaykh was established, to whom an advance messenger was sent. Some ten days of travel on the route to the south of the Jamuna passed without incident; but when they reached the deep ghat of the Chambal river—a place renowned in medieval as in modern times for the robbery of travellers—the party was shadowed by a hostile group

⁴⁸ The appearance of the Black Death in India has recently been doubted. A similar epidemic in the Kathmandu valley is mentioned in the *Gopalarajavamsavali*, occurring nine and ten years earlier in the Nepal Samvat years 448 and 449, suggesting that the epidemic may have taken a different overland route from China (*Gopālarājavāṃśhāvalī* 1985).

⁴⁹ The date given by the biographer is 7 Rabi' II 801, corresponding to Tuesday 17 December 1398. The Muslim day commences and ends at nightfall. The official record of Timur's campaign in India mentions that Mahmud Shah Tughluq and his commander Mallu Khan took refuge inside the city wall after defeat (in the hours of daylight through a western gate facing Hauz-i Khass). They fled from the city during the hours of darkness of Chahar-Shamba/Tuesday night into Wednesday (18th December) (Yazdi 1379/2001: 114-5, 118).

of unbelievers.⁵⁰ However the message from Gesudaraz had reached his disciple in Gwalior, and the military commandant there sent out an armed force of Muslims to escort the fugitives from Dehli, and these proceeded to put the “unbelievers” to flight.

The demands made by Gesudaraz and his party upon his Chishti disciple and other resident Muslims were for immediate board and lodging, and for cash and provisions to continue their journey. There must also have been other distinguished fugitives from Dehli for whom provision had to be made out of local resources.⁵¹ The exceptional services rendered by the disciple of Gesudaraz, ‘Ala’ al-Din Gwaliyari, led to his investiture with the first *khilāfat* or grant of succession by Gesudaraz, before even the Shaykh’s two sons were invested.⁵² The pressure on local resources probably led the party to move on to enjoy the hospitality of several small *qaṣbas* in the area. Their location suggests that Gesudaraz had not yet decided in which direction he should move. In these settlements the biographer names the local notables who met with Gesudaraz. In one place there were all Afghans. This detail suggests the planting of a community by one of the Dehli Sultans as a garrison, a pattern that we know took place in some of the small settlements immediately south of the capital city (cf. Barani 1862: 57).

The subsequent movement of Gesudaraz and his party to Chanderi suggests that the Shaykh had made up his mind that he would go to the southeast or the south, to the Muslim courts and capitals that had emerged in Gujarat or the Deccan. His first exploration was in Gujarat. The Shaykh spent many months in Gujarat, but his prospects of establishing himself there were frustrated by the rivalries that had emerged between factions that already divided the high officers of the newly established dynasty of the Tak Sultans of Gujarat.

In the first stages of the journey the itinerary of the Shaykh and his party perhaps indicates indecision about their ultimate destination. This was resolved when the party turned southward to Jhatara. The next moves were westwards, by longer marches over greater distances, passing through the old-established Muslim settlements of Chanderi and Dhar towards a greater Muslim center of

⁵⁰ The brigandage of Chambal Ghat is also a likely setting for a tale found in Mushtaqi and several of the Indo-Afghan histories of the rescue from dacoits of a humble married couple by Sultan Sikandor Lodi as “the Veiled Rider” (Digby forthcoming).

⁵¹ Evidence for this survives in the great *khatt-i bihārī* script illuminated *Qur’ān* now in the collection of Prince Sadr al-Din Agha Khan, which has a colophon mention its completion at Gwalior in 801/1399 (Welch and Welch 1982: 141-4). For *khatt-i bihārī*, see Arberry 1939, Pl. 18: *Qur’ān* dated 857/1453, “Bihari script, a good and early example.”

⁵² The primacy of Shaykh ‘Ala’ al-Din’s investiture continued to be acknowledged in modern times, when the descendents of the Gwalior Shaykh would attend the ‘*urs* or commemoration of the death of Gesudaraz celebrated at Gulbarga; attended by the author in 1963.

power in Gujarat. After Gesudaraz had left Gwalior, three months and ten days elapsed before he reached Baroda around 6 June 1399. In the following month (Dhu'l-Qa'da, July 1399), Gesudaraz went from Baroda to Cambay (Khambayat). This is the last date mentioned in the narrative. This move was at the summons [or "humble 'arṣadāshī"] of Zafar Khan, who was at this time consolidating his authority as founder of the dynasty of Sultans of Gujarat. Zafar Khan came out of the town to a distance of 5 or 6 *kos* [perhaps 20-25 kilometers] to welcome the Shaykh. The *Siyar-i Muḥammadi* at this point very briefly records a significant conversation between the Sultan, his courtiers and the Shaykh.

"Is there anyone still with you nowadays, who will speak to you about your faults and inform you of them?" Qazi Sulayman, who was one of the Zafar Khan's courtiers, said: "My Lord Khan does not indulge in anything forbidden." Hazrat Makhdum said: "I did not say that. He can seek to satisfy in all ways." Zafar Khan and all his friends who were present bent their heads.

The brevity and circumlocution of this reported diplomatic exchange of words masks the political importance of the deal that is on offer. The opening words suggest that Gesudaraz was already well acquainted with Zafar Khan, probably from the days when the latter's father Wajih al-Mulk was a favorite of the court of Sultan Feroz Shah Tughluq in the metropolis. As a young man Zafar Khan may have attended at the Chishti *dargāhs*. Gesudaraz offered himself as Pir or Sufi guide under whose spiritual authority and protection (*wilāyat*) the new realm that Zafar Khan was establishing would flourish. It is not surprising that the proposal provoked resistance from those who were already established in the entourage of this rising chieftain, nor that a remonstrance was voiced by a member of this entourage who was a Qazi. Moreover the links between the family of Wajih al-Mulk and the prominent Sufi Shaykh Jalal al-Din "Makhdum-i Jahanian" of Uchh had already been made in Dehli, probably at least three decades earlier, and close relations between the Sultans of Gujarat and the descendants of "Makhdum-i Jahanian" endured through the rule of the dynasty (Sikandar b. Manjhu 1956: 10-11; 1899: 3, 27, 134, 177; Bayley 1886: 70). "From this it is manifest that with the fulfilment of the prayer (*du'ā*) of Hazrat Makhdum-i Jahanian the tribe of the Taks were rulers in Gujarat for fourteen generations" ('Abd al-Rahman Chishti 1997: 1208).

Like other incidents of the journey, this exchange bears witness to the political astuteness and powers of organization of the octogenarian Sufi Shaykh. The route taken may once again indicate that he was keeping his options open. He had first gone to Baroda, from where—if no invitation had reached him from Zafar Khan at Cambay—he could have gone on more expeditiously towards the Deccan.

Gesudaraz had known the Deccan from his childhood. From his adolescence he was already familiar with the route between Dehli and the Deccan, where his father was a Sufi Shaykh whose grave near Dawlatabad already possessed charisma. Apart from his own reputation as a major Shaykh, this geographical knowledge may have been a reason for the acceptance of his leadership by the party fleeing from Dehli towards this ultimate destination. That they did accept his leadership is evident from the narrative of the journey. From the moment of their hasty flights from Dehli Gesudaraz must have thought of the court of the sultan of the Deccan as a likely destination, though the route via Eracch might suggest consideration of either Jawnpur or Kalpi, which were both at this time emerging as centers of new state-formations, as possible places of refuge. In Cambay the Shaykh met others with "a previous link in devotion." He had been joined by a servitor (*khādim*) with a connection with the Sufi shrine of Aland in the Deccan, some forty kilometers away from the new Bahmani capital of Gulbarga. Information about recent conditions in the well-established Bahmani realm may have strengthened Gesudaraz's resolve to go.

After his "stay for a while in Gujarat," Gesudaraz set out towards Dawlatabad. The date is not mentioned when Gesudaraz and his party moved back to Baroda. From Baroda his party must have crossed the Narmada River. The next settlement mentioned is Sultanpur, which lies by the Gomai, a northerly tributary of the Tapti. From there the party's route ran south by southeast to Dawlatabad. In the hills above Dawlatabad, Gesudaraz visited the grave of his father Sayyid Yusuf ("Raju" or "Raja") Qattal ("the battler"). At that place a message came from the Bahmani ruler of the Deccan, Sultan Feroz Shah, to meet him in the vicinity of his capital of Gulbarga, which lay at a considerable distance farther south by southeast.

This was the last stage of the Shaykh's journey. He still had more than two decades of life ahead of him at Gulbarga, where he had a considerable political role to play, and the traditions of his spiritual authority, his teachings and his literary works were preserved down to the present day.

In contrast to the situation in Gujarat, the Bahmani Sultans of the Deccan had enjoyed their independence from Dehli for half a century. Chishti Sufi links with the Deccan had been established by the forced migration of 1328 from Dehli to Dawlatabad, in which Gesudaraz himself had travelled as a little boy. The vicinity of Dawlatabad had been sanctified by the presence there of Nizam al-Din Awliya's *khālifa* Burhan al-Din Gharib, and of Gesudaraz's own father Shaykh Raju Qattal. An invitation came from the Bahmani Sultan Firuz Shah to Gesudaraz, to establish himself in the new capital of Gulbarga. Gesudaraz accordingly set out from Gujarat and spent the last two decades of his long life

in Gulbarga. He and his family exercised an influence there that the Sultan's successors came to regret.

LINGUISTIC INDIGINIZATION

Dehli

As much as in the settlement patterns of Sufi diaspora, the course of fourteenth-century provincialization can be neatly followed in processes of linguistic indiginization. One may note that some of those who have worked during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries on "modern Indo-Aryan vernaculars" (e.g., Sir George Grierson, S.K. Chatterjee, Sir Ralph Turner) have sometimes lacked awareness that dominant forms of speech reflect the structures of historical political authority. Today this is a fact of which members of the politically sophisticated classes of the subcontinent can hardly fail to be conscious. By contrast Hafiz Mahmud Sherani (1880-1947) was a scholar trained in Oriental College, Lahore and by Sir Thomas Arnold in London. His views reflect a strong sense of the influence of political power and "state-formation" upon language in pre-modern times. Unfortunately his extensive writings are not available in English. No scholar of the twentieth century had a clearer idea than Sherani of the historical background to the speech of the Dehli sultanate and its heirs. To support his views he could draw upon the large manuscript collection that he had amassed.

Sherani, with some reason, objected to the term "Western Hindi" for the proto-Urdu of the urban population of the capital city of Dehli. In the terminology and analysis of Grierson's *Linguistic Survey of India*, Dehli was at the far western end of "Western Hindi."⁵³ Sherani argued that the definition of the relationship was rooted in the nineteenth-century revival of Hindi spearheaded by Bharatendu Harishchandra in Kashi/Varanasi (with a distinct element of "Hindu" revivalism). This impulse was strengthened by the scholarly publications of the Nagari Pracarini Sabha ("The Society for promoting Nagari script") in the same city, whose name itself reveals some ideological bias. This factor certainly had an influence on the historical perceptions of Grierson and other western Indologists and Sanskritists. Sherani argued for an equally strong continuum between Lahnda (Siraiki), Panjabi and the language that evolved in urban Dehli

⁵³ The matter is confused by the quotation by modern controversialists of references to *Hindi* and *Hindawi/Hindūyi* in sources of the period of the Dehli Sultanate. The term can be shown to stand for any Indian language, including Sanskrit.

after the creation of the new capital (Sherani 1930: 67-9, 80). Such elements in the language of the capital probably reflected a late twelfth-century shift—a large initial transfer of population with the establishment of the new capital and a subsequent inflow under the political pressures of the thirteenth century into Dehli from older settlements in the Panjab and Sind. Another influence, less considered by Sherani, that may have affected the speech of the urban population is the considerable number of captives taken and swept into the service or slave population from nearby regions in the first half of the thirteenth century—the west Panjab, northern Rajasthan and the upper Gangetic Doab.

Going south: Rajasthan

From the southern diaspora of fourteenth-century Muslim settlements from Dehli and the east Panjab, literary evidence survives of dialects that reflects the form of speech that had been current in the capital city. On the southern road from Dehli as well as the eastern Panjab and the Ganga-Jamuna Doab—the *dakṣiṇāpatha* of Gommans' analysis of military routes (Gommans 2002: 17-20)—wherever Muslim garrisons from Dehli were left behind, a kind of "proto-Urdu" or "coarse Hindostani" continued to be spoken in later centuries. What survives from the Muslim enclaves en route appears to be less than the corpus of such material from the new nuclei of military power and concentrations of immigrant groups in the forts and settlements of the Deccan itself. The roads extend through Nagaur and Chanderi to Gujarat, and through northwestern Maharashtra where, in such settlements as Burhanpur, local sixteenth-century Sufi Shaykhs composed in the proto-Urdu that they called Gujarī (Sherani 1930: 53-108; 1966: vol. 1, 159-200).

The case of the Muslim settlements of Rajasthan is of particular interest, as the structures that bound them to Muslim government were weakened in the fifteenth century. We can follow the fortunes of the insecure state established at Nagaur by a collateral line of the Sultans of Gujarat around 1400, which was put to an end by the growing strength of the Rathor Mal Dev of Marwar in the early sixteenth century (Shokoohy 1993: 7-20). Mal Dev's destruction of the public buildings of the Khans of Nagaur (Shokoohy 1993: 20) and Mushtaqi's testimony regarding refugees from Nagaur demonstrating at the gate of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi (d.1526) in Dehli (Mushtaqi 1993: 156) suggest that members of the old urban population of Nagaur may have fled or been taken to other centers at this time.

The percentage of Muslims in such cities as Jodhpur suggests a historical continuity with settler communities established in Rajasthan before the Mughal period. These armed populations found places in the armies of Marwar, Mewar and other growing Rajput polities. The "Afghan" Sheranis, previously settled at

Khatu, served in Rathor armies in Mughal times (Sherani 1966: vol. 1, 19-21, introductory memoir by M.M. Sherani).

Communities of native Muslim soldiers who fought on the side of the Rana of Mewar figure prominently in the accounts of the siege of Chitaur by the emperor Akbar in the winter of 1567. The commander of the Rathors who assisted the defenders was a Muslim called Shihab Khan. His house was of the two places where the women were immolated in the *jauhar* (Abu'l-Fazl 1902-39: vol. 2, 472). The principal marksman on the Rajput side was a Muslim called Isma'il. He wounded a man standing beside the emperor, but the emperor himself took aim at the embrasure, and "afterwards it was found that the royal gun had finished the wretch" (Abu'l Fazl 1902-39: vol. 2, 470).

A more remarkable case is that of the contingent of hand-gunners, said to number one thousand, who also fought for the Rana Udai Singh at the same siege. They come from Kalpi, far to the northeast and a ferry-point on the south side of the river Jamuna. They en masse escaped by a bold stratagem from the general massacre of the defenders of Chitaur. After the fall of the fortress their leaders claimed to be part of the Mughal forces, and led their followers and families off as if they were captives about to be executed. Having escaped unchallenged through the imperial lines, they marched back to their homes at Kalpi (Abu'l-Fazl 1902-39: vol. 2, 475-6 and 476n.).

There can be little doubt that these men were the descendants of the fourteenth-century population of Kalpi. After Timur's invasion, Kalpi had emerged as the capital of a dynasty descending from the local commander of Feroz Shah Tughluq's reign (Bihamad Khani 1972: 54-89). The independence of the Khans of Kalpi lasted for less than half a century, and was ended by a division of their territories between the Sultan of Jawnpur and the Sultan of Malwa (Digby 2003a: 177-8; Shihab Hakim 1968: 59; Nizam al-Din Ahmad 1927-40: vol. 3, 453-6, 515-9). Kalpi remained an important stage on the route from Awadh and eastern India through Kalpi to Gwalior and Chanderi (see above), and also via Bayana to central Rajasthan. It could also serve as a homestead to a wide-roaming and mercenary specialist war-band.

Evidence of place-names and the Hindu castes mentioned suggest that 'Umar Mihrabi's *Hujjat al-Hind*, which was a work designed to rescue Muslims from the corruptions of a local Hindu rural environment, may have been written in fifteenth-century Rajasthan.⁵⁴ The presence of large groups of Muslims on the

⁵⁴ The ascription of Mihrabi's *Hujjat al-Hind* to a date of 1645, found in Rieu's catalogue (1879: vol. 1, 28-9; cf. Hardy 1958: 367-529), ultimately derives from the date of transcription of a manuscript in Tipu Sultan's library, loosely described in that catalogue by Charles

south Rajasthan/Gujarat border appears to be pre-Mughal. Not many years later Muslim painters, identified by name in the earliest examples of the mature Mewar style—Nisaradi/Nasir al-Din and Sahibdin/Shihab al-Din—appear to have been trained in a vigorous and highly-colored local style before they came under “popular Mughal” influence. Sahibdin’s *Rāgamālā* stands as a classic example of his assimilation of his evident popular Mughal training to the native pictorial tradition in which he was temperamentally rooted (Topsfield 1981: 233).

At a humbler level of artistic production, there is evidence of the preoccupations and the spoken language of these groups of south Rajasthani Muslims in surviving leaves of *Śākunāvalī* texts (Books of Omens; see Digby 1995: 342-60). The line of descent of these texts (as I have argued on palaeographic grounds) proceeds from western Indian Jaina *apabhraṃśa* through Perso-Arabic script versions to local “proto-Urdu” in Devanagari script, in which the *basmala* is also written in Devanagari script as incipit.

The texts of these leaves are of greater importance than the unpretentious illustrations. In the form of questions and answers, the text furnishes examples of strictly pragmatic speech devoid of literary pretensions. The questions asked are answered according to the birds seen at break of day. These questions show the preoccupations of members of a moderately prosperous settled community who had a tightly knit Muslim family structure, and were engaged in agriculture, trade and voluntary partnerships. “Cultivation. Don’t cultivate! Be patient.” “Wife. Don’t take a wife. She is bad, even if she appears good. And don’t decide till some days later.” “Lost object. It is safe. You will get double” (Digby 1995: 357). For an estimated date of transcription early in the seventeenth century the language is a forward-looking variety of “proto-Urdu”/coarse Hindostani. An illiterate man from northern India today would have little difficulty in understanding most of the questions and answers.

Going south: The Deccan and Nizami Dakani

“If we are to see an example of the kind of language that was spoken in Dehli in the age of the Tughluqs,” Hafiz Mahmud Sherani (1930: 72) wrote, “we must look in old Dakani literature.” Since Sherani wrote the corpus of

Stewart. Apart from the Hindu castes mentioned, which include the Taks from south Panjab who provided the ruling dynasty of Sultans of Gujarat, there is a reference to pilgrimages to the shrine of Mallinath, an Isma‘ili influenced cult-center in Rajasthan that gained adherents in the fifteenth century (Khan 1997, 120-1 and *passim*).

published old Dakani literature has been expanded, and some of this literature can be firmly dated to the fifteenth century.

In discussing the language of the southern settlers, we must leave aside the vernacular works attributed to Gesudaraz, since there are elements of doubt concerning their date and redaction. Prose works such as *Mi'rāj al-Āshiqīn* bear the marks of the Shaykh's powerful and curious imagination, but they may be posthumous adaptations by followers from originals in Persian. In *ghazals*, the *takhalluṣ* of "Shahbaz" or the incorporation of the Shaykh's name may have been used posthumously like the *chhap* of Bhakti compositions (e.g., those attributed to Kabir) or the spurious *diwāns* of earlier Indian Chishti Shaykhs.

Sherani (1960: 72) noted that the language of Shah Miranji, a Sufi poet of Bijapur born in 1496, was probably close to that of the fourteenth-century settlers from Delhi. Attention has since been drawn to a number of other Dakani poets whose works survive. From their mention of individual Sultans or Sufi Shaykhs to whom they were attached, these poets flourished before the end of the fifteenth century. Ashraf was the author of a *mathnavī* dated to 1503. Other contemporaries were Mushtaq and Lutfi (who both wrote in the reign of Muhammad Shah Lashkari, 1463-1482) and Feroz, who was a devotee of Shaykh Muhammad Ibrahim (died 1503) (Zor 1960: 16-21). Despite the presence of a few unfamiliar Dakani words (e.g., some postpositions) and traces of the influence of Marathi, these limpid *ghazals* could be readily understood and appreciated by modern Urduphone audiences and singers.⁵⁵

With regard to Nizami Dakani's *mathnavī* (examined below), we may be in agreement with the editor's dating of about four decades earlier than was previously thought, between 1430 and 1435, thus making it the earliest extant "composition in the Urdu language" (Nizami Dakani 1973: introduction, 7, 11-6). The poem may have been written in an environment of a rural settlement away from the court of the ruling Bahmani Sultan located at Bidar. Enough grammatical indications remain to place it within the "Dehlavi" tradition, but its language is confusing because it draws on the linguistic tradition of the "Matter" of the Natha-Siddhas. This is a problem similar to that of "the language and languages of Kabir" (Vaudeville 1993: 109-28).

This poem survives in a single manuscript, lacking many folios, ill-written and with curious and difficult orthographic features (Nizami Dakani 1973). It

⁵⁵ In a similar case the vigorous and popular Multani singer Abida Parvin has sung and recorded a well-known *ghazal* of the eighteenth-century Dakani poet Siraj Awrangabadi before a rapturous and demonstrative immigrant audience in the United Kingdom. For the text of the *ghazal*, see Matthews and Shackle 1972: 34-6.

presents problems of editorial interpretation that are much worse even than those of the *Candāyan*.⁵⁶ The language of Nizami Dakani's poem is obscure compared to that of the *ghazals* and *qaṣīdas* of fifteenth-century poets associated with the Bahmani Sultans and their court at Bidar. A feature that *Kadam Rāo Padam Rāo* shares with the Awadhi *premākhyāns* is its predominantly indigenous vocabulary. Out of 12,000 lexical items noted by its editor only 125 are of Perso-Arabic origin. While a few of these words have indigenized phonetic spellings, which are also characteristic of the Dakani *ghazal* tradition, there is no evidence of intentional concealment of non-indigenous identity in the spellings of Muslim personal names or items of court ceremonial. The grammatical forms and syntax mainly conform to the western "proto-Urdu" forms brought south by the armies and settlers of the Dehli sultanate. However, the prosody follows Persian models, the poem being written in the *mutaqārib* meter often used in Persian *mathnavis* (Gladwin 1798: 138).⁵⁷ The poem takes its subject matter and idioms from local pre-Muslim tradition—"Matter' of a particular area or locality" (Chatterjee 1982: 10),⁵⁸ but the poem does not display an intentional indigenization with a "linguistic cleansing" and concealment of foreign traits.

The first folio of the manuscript preserves the incipit of the poem, which like the *Candāyan* retains the formal progression of Persian *mathnavis* from *ḥamd* (praise of God) through *na't* (praise of the Prophet) to *mādh* (praise of the ruler). From the information in the panegyric of the Sultan, the poem appears to have been written between 1430, when Sultan Ahmad Shah assumed the title of *Wālī* and transferred his capital from Gulbarga to Bidar, and 1439, the date of his death (Nizami Dakani 1973: 15-6).

The opening part of the narrative is missing. One may guess that it was a story of the ruler being brought proof of his queen's infidelity, similar to that of the circulation of the fruit of immortality from lover to lover, till it came back to the original donor, the king. The ruler, Kadam Rao, was in a state of rage and grief, which he expressed in long dialogues with his minister Padam Rao and with his queen.

After this, when the King obeyed Padam Rao's injunction to anoint the latter's forehead with musk, a lotus appeared on it and Padam Rao raised his head

⁵⁶ Jalibi's edition presents a facsimile of each page of the manuscript facing his own transcription into a more acceptable Urdu orthography. This meticulous approach can be commended to future editors of *premākhyāns* from manuscripts in Arabo-Persian script.

⁵⁷ This is in contrast to the Awadhi narrative poems that we shall examine below

⁵⁸ Chatterjee uses "Matter" in the sense of medieval European storytellers—e.g., "Matter of Britain"—the corpus of tales regarding King Arthur; "Matter of France"—similar stories regarding Charlemagne.

above the height of the palace roof. Padam Rao therefore was not a mere minister, but had the attributes of the great snake Vasuki, King of the Nagas (cobras) and he begins to look like a supernatural guardian of the realm. With this we can confidently identify Kadam Rao as a folktale personification of a ruler of the Kadamba dynasty of Karnataka who worshipped the Naga as tutelary deity and putative ancestor (Moraes 1931: 247-8). The last effective rulers of the dynasty had been displaced less than a century before in the territory of Goa by Muslims, and elsewhere by the rising state of Vijayanagar (Moraes 1931: 212-6). Yet the popular stereotype of the poem was very different from the courtly and "Sanskritized" behavior of the Kadambas, as revealed by their inscriptions, at the time when they were rivals of the Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra. However, the stereotype in the poem may have been handed down from centuries earlier. The poem, like the Awadhi *Candāyan* lacks mention of a Brahmanical priesthood or the high gods of Hinduism.

Kadam Rao told the minister of his intention to fast, and to this the minister objected strongly saying that if the king fasted even one day out of vexation, his kingdom would be ruined. The capital of Hiranagar ("Diamond City") would be desolated and the king's enemy would benefit.⁵⁹ The king then said that he was deprived of the chance of meeting foreigners. This was a custom that had been followed by the ancient Persian kings, Sasan and Jam(shed).⁶⁰ Padam Rao should bring a foreigner (*pardesi*) for the king to serve and bestow gifts upon him. The minister initially forbade the king to summon foreigners who raised hopes that they did not fulfil, and their ways were evil. The king grew angry and repeated his demand. Padam Rao raised his head high as the roof and the king argued with him through a watch of the night.⁶¹ The minister told him that he should not summon a Jogi since all Jogis consumed wine and meat. For an hour of pleasure Kadam Rao would pay with a heavy hangover.

The minister perforce gave way, and the king was glad and distributed presents of costly garments. He then told his attendants to summon a stranger for him to entertain and honor. His courtiers told him that Aghor Nath, son of Matsyendra Nath had come from foreign parts. We then enter into the second

⁵⁹ The king's enemy is a single formal character in expositions of statecraft, like the king's minister.

⁶⁰ A solitary reference in the text to a Persian classic, Firdawsi's *Shāhnāma*, and to customs outside India.

⁶¹ Late at night the king would have been in the women's quarters. His detail recalls Akbar's nocturnal discussions with religious figures. For reasons of propriety, these men were suspended in a basket outside his window.

half of the poem, which turns from “Matter of Kings” to “Matter of Jogis.” For the medieval Indian listener familiar with the “Matter of Jogis” tidings of “Aghor Nath” and “the son of Matsyendra” were wholly inauspicious, and such listeners would expect disaster. Celibacy was prescribed for Nathapanthi Jogis; but Matsyendra, Guru of Gorakh Nath, had fallen into deep forgetfulness, enchanted by the Queen of the Land of Women (Digby 2000: 160-75) in the Plantain Forest (*kadalī ban*). Their ill-begotten offspring, the boy called Binduk Nath or Mina Nath was said to have been “split” by Gorakh Nath to liberate his Guru Matsyendra from obstacles to the Yogic “path” (Digby 2000: 178-9). That he was alive and well was not good news, nor that his name was Aghor Nath, which suggests a particularly malevolent Nathapanthi addicted to eating corpses (Briggs 1938: 71, 244; Russell and Lal 1916: vol 2, 13).⁶²

When summoned to the royal presence, Kadam Rao inquired what lands the Jogi had visited. Aghor Nath gave a boastful account of his travels and magical powers. He possessed the art of transmuting iron into gold and the higher art of *amar ved* (“immortality,” but in practice the art of “shape-shifting”). First Aghor Nath demonstrated in Kadam Rao’s presence the art of transmuting iron into gold, and then he instructed him in this secret, so that Kadam Rao could successfully perform the operation himself. He then offered to teach him the *amar ved*. At the behest of Aghor Nath, the king wrung the neck of his pet parrot. Aghor Nath then passed into the corpse and talked to the king. He then taught the king the mystery of this art as well. The king’s vital force passed into the body of a parrot and—predictably—Aghor Nath took up residence in the vacated corpse of the king.

Aghor Nath feared to enter the women’s quarters of the palace lest he should give himself away by a lack of familiarity with its ways, and the minister was struck by the king’s strange behavior. Kadam Rao, transformed into a parrot, flew off to distant lands, but after a while he found himself flying over his old palace. The parrot saw Padam Rao down below. He flew down and told the minister his tale of woe. That night the minister assumed his snake form and bit the sleeping Jogi on the toe. The soul of the king moved back into the corpse of his former self. Kadam Rao found that the honor of his queen had not been violated. At this point the manuscript breaks off, and we are left to assume that they “lived happily ever after.”

⁶² Russell describes them as “the most disreputable class of Saiva mendicants who feed on human corpses and excrement, and in past times practised cannibalism.” A more morally neutral source states that “they have always been held in low esteem because of their many eccentric practices . . . not least cannibalism” (Feuerstein 1990: 12).

As we see, the narrative divides abruptly into two halves. The first is the story of the king's anger and of the protection of the king and of the realm by the minister or snake-guardian. The second half is drawn from the "Matter" or legendary cycle of the Natha-Siddhas. The Natha cult and Natha Jogi presence in the fifteenth century was almost pan-Indian, extending at least from beyond the Panjab and Dehli to Bengal and the Deccan, but perhaps it is possible to make a local regional connection uniting these two themes. The area where the power of a branch of the Kadamba dynasty survived into the fourteenth century was the southern Konkan. It is also the area where a late (post-tenth century?) and quite recently discovered group of cave-temples survives. They contain the only medieval Indian group of sculptural representations of the Natha-Siddhas, including an image of superior quality showing Matsyendra Nath riding his vehicle, the fish (Deshpande 1986: 17, 105, Plate 58B). This would suggest an association of these two dominant cults—that of the Great Snake and that of the Natha-Siddhas—in a single area, which is reflected in the poem of Nizami Dakani.

A familiar variant among "shape-shifting" contests is that of the wonder-worker who passes into the body of a king. In these a Jogi is often the magician (Digby 1990: 11, 20-21). For analysis of the tale of the poem, we must take Aghor Nath as a doublet of his father Matsyendra, as is the case when the son is named Mina Nath. In one version that is still current, Matsyendra Nath passes into the dead body of the King of Prayag with the pious intention of begetting an heir for him, and he duly abandons the body of the king when his task is accomplished (Digby 2000: 202-23). The motives of the wonder-worker in such stories are not invariably malignant (though often so). But the variant just mentioned is taken from a modern Hindi recension of the *Gorakhcāritra* in which a post-Gandhian concern for public benefit has often been introduced (Digby 2000: 287-88). The central episode of the cycle is the dalliance of Matsyendra with the Queen of the Land of Women in the Plantain Forest (*kadalī ban*). Men have no enduring presence there and even Matsyendra's young son has to be taken away when the great Jogi and his disciple Gorakh leave (Digby 2000: 160-80). This version appears to have been generally current in northern India including Dehli, Maharashtra and Bengal (Das Gupta 1949: 213; Digby 2000: 226-27).⁶³ In this version, shape-shifting into the corpse of a king would have no purpose. However, an improbable variant, in which the Land of Women is

⁶³ A prosaic and rationalizing version told by Gesudaraz on his journey southwards from Dehli (Digby 2000: 226-27; Husayni 1936: 145-46).

no longer the Land of Women alone, is preserved in a late south Indian source. "In days of yore, a great Yogi named Matsyendra . . . entered the body of a dead king and thereby got access to his palace."⁶⁴ This is held up as an example for Sankaracarya to emulate, and the guru does this, thereby achieving "acquirement of knowledge of sex-love" (Madhava-Vidyaranya 1986: 113-23). It is clear therefore that a south Indian variant existed in the cycle of the Natha-Siddhas which associated Matsyendra's dalliance with an act of shape-shifting, even though his son and doublet Aghor Nath did not attain his aim in Nizami Dakani's poem.

Nizami Dakani's tale of Kadam Rao and Padam Rao—in the form of a single comparable vernacular narrative poem surviving from the early southern migrants from Dehli—has furnished a "control,"⁶⁵ by which the differing intentions and achievements of eastward migrants from Dehli, the poets of the Awadhi Sufi *premākhyāns* can be judged. These also are narrative poems modelled on the Persian *mathnavī* genre. The *Candāyan*—earliest of the Awadhi poems that has survived—is probably half a century older than this Dakani *mathnavī*. The remainder of the surviving Awadhi *premākhyāns* are all more than half a century later.

Going east: Awadh and Mawlana Da'ud

A different process appears to have been at work before the close of the fourteenth century along the eastern route from the capital of Dehli, in the *qaṣbas* and Sufi *dargāhs* of Awadh. On this southeasterly route, there is less published evidence of popular speech deriving from the proto-Urdu of the capital, but prominent Sufis settled in Awadh often had strong connections with the capital of Dehli and prolonged periods of residence there. Yet the verses quoted in the *Rushd Nāma* of 'Abd al-Quddus, a Persian treatise composed at Rudawli around 1480, are of distinctly eastern origin (Digby 1975: 44, 56-66).⁶⁶ Some of the verses are also present in the Vajrayana *caryāpadas* of Bengal some centuries earlier, or in *nṛguna bhakti* traditions associated with Kabir.

⁶⁴ Like the poem of Nizami Dakani, this text states the belief that the physical well-being of the ruler had a "sympathetic" effect on the material welfare of the kingdom.

⁶⁵ In the sense used by Clifford Geertz, comparing the practice of Islamic Morocco and Indonesia.

⁶⁶ There is no verse quoted in specifically Dehlavi/"western Hindi," but there is one *rekhta* (macaronic) couplet, which was a form popular in Dehli. An example of a *dohā* common to 'Abd al-Quddus and to recensions of Kabir describes the blind Guru and a blind disciple who fell into the well (Digby 1975: 61). This derives from earlier Eastern Indian tradition. S.C.R. Weightman's critical edition of the verses is still awaited.

The key text for the development that was taking place in Awadh is the *Candāyan* of Mawlana Daʿūd, which provides us with a date and place of composition, around 1380-81 at the Muslim settlement of Dalmau on the west bank of the Ganga, downstream from the important frontier settlements of Kara/Manikpur on either side of the river (Digby 1994a: 99-110). The strategic importance of this site is attested by a fort, which may have existed before the Muslim settlement. This settlement had control both of a ferry for overland trade and of river-borne traffic.⁶⁷

The ambiguities of the Perso-Arabic script of older manuscripts of the *Candāyan* and later *premākhyāns* give rise to acute problems of editorial interpretation, with the consequence that modern editorial transcriptions differ widely in noticeable accord with the disciplinary trainings and ideological backgrounds of the individual editors.⁶⁸ Nevertheless the widespread and early popularity of the work is attested by five fragmentary early illustrated manuscripts in Perso-Arabic script (the illustrations in a variety of regional styles) and one unillustrated manuscript; and also a Persian translation by ʿAbd al-Quddus Gangohi of which only a few verses survived the wars between Bahlul Lodi and Husayn Sharqi. A later Devanagari transcription was probably undertaken in Rajasthan, and there is an old translation into Bengali.

The verse literature produced in the *qaṣbas* and *dargāhs* of the region of Awadh from the end of the fourteenth century onwards is in a different dialect if not a different language from the current speech of the urban population of Dehli. It is a fully developed form of “eastern Hindi,” with different terminations in the tenses of the verbs, and different forms of the postpositions;⁶⁹ and a vocabulary which appears consciously to exclude Persian and Arabic loanwords. This conceals—one may argue deliberately—the obvious source of inspiration for the new romantic narrative poems with tinges of mystical sentiment. This is not Sanskritic, but derived from the Persian poetic tradition so greatly loved by Sufis, and particularly from the romantic *mathnavis* of the pattern set

⁶⁷ Visited by A.K. Behl and the present writer in December 2003. For a fourteenth-century anecdote of a merchant carrying cloth woven in Awadh to sell in Dehli, one of whose bales was lost at a ferry, see Hamid Qalandar 1959: 183.

⁶⁸ P.L. Gupta (Dalmai 1964), numismatist, art-historian and familiar with the rural life and dialects of Awadh and Bihar; M.P. Gupta (Dalmai 1967), Hindi Department, Agra University, with a preference for the later Nagari script Ms at Bikaner; and M. Ansarullah (Dalmai 1996), Urdu Department, Aligarh Muslim University, who has provided an edition in the script in which it was originally transmitted.

⁶⁹ There would still be grave interpretative difficulties in preparing a descriptive grammar of the language of the *Candāyan*, but for a descriptive grammar based on Jayasi's sixteenth-century *premākhyān*, see Dhar 1949: 1-29.

by Nizami of Ganja and imitated in Dehli by Amir Khusraw. The sophisticated strategy that was adopted by these poets in Awadh was a deliberate bilingualism designed to propagate a world-view, a climate of sensibility and a theology that would enhance the influence, power and acceptability of the immigrants in this particular Indian environment. In the celebration of the beauties of the Indian countryside, its fruits and flowers, its culinary delicacies and the pleasures of its people, it is also a gesture of loyalty and commitment on the part of the settlers.

There are many aspects of the contents of the *Candāyan* and later Muslim *premākhyāns* to which we may briefly call attention here. One aspect is the alliances of the settler-Muslim poets with groups displaying similar sensibilities, usually of a socially disruptive and “anti-Brahmanical” kind. The earliest of these *premākhyāns* has a “folk-tale” source in the widely distributed oral saga of the Ahir hero Lorik (Vaudeville 1996: 262-72).⁷⁰ “Sanskrit writers describe the abhiras [ahirs] as arrogant, violent, addicted to wine and women, beef-eaters and cattle-stealers—altogether a dangerous wild tribe unworthy of contact with Aryan castes” (Vaudeville 1996: 262; cf. Russell and Lal 1916: vol. 2, 18-38).

Sympathy for wandering cowherds and sellers of curds, who may be identified as Ahirs, is apparent in the Sufi anecdotal literature of the Dehli Sultanate (Amir Hasan 1966: 227-28, see above). Lorik’s flight with a married woman is a high point in the narrative. The visit of the lady with her companions to the temple is sympathetically treated, but one Vidya Dani, who by his name may be a Brahman and goes around demanding tax or alms, has his fingers cut off by Lorik.⁷¹ On the other hand the *bājir*, the wandering ascetic who has been thought to represent a wandering Buddhist *Vajrācārya*, is more sympathetically treated. He behaves like a wandering Darvesh in the Persian Sufi tradition, who is “a martyr of Love.” He falls unconscious at the sight of Chanda glimpsed at an upper window and goes around singing about it.⁷²

⁷⁰ The subject matter recalls the subsequent use made by eighteenth-century Panjabi Muslim poets of tribal oral tales of ill-fated love. This sympathy for wandering cowherds and sellers of curds recurs. In one of the Indo-Afghan tales set in the late fifteenth century the hero is a herdsman, who regains his love—the daughter of a *baqqāl* (baniya) from the Afghan commander who has carried her away (Mushtaqi 1993: 23-26; ‘Abd Allah 1954: 24-27). In Yadgar’s late version, the hero is transformed into a baniya of the same caste as the girl, and he adds the detail that he took 250 gold coins from the dead Afghan’s clothes (Yadgar 1931: 23-26; Digby forthcoming).

⁷¹ In the *Miragāvatī* of Kutban the hero is subject to similar demands by a “Dani” on the road, which he spurns.

⁷² The identification was made by P.L. Gupta (Dalmai 1964: 42). Its plausibility is strengthened by evidence of south Indian Buddhist *vajrācāryas* travelling widely in India as

The importance of the *Candāyan* is that it marks the creation—apparently at a specific date in the eighth decade of the fourteenth century and at the exact location of a Muslim settlement in Awadh—of a literary genre that was inspired by an ideological strategy of considerable subtlety.⁷³ An effacement of the signs of the Muslim and Persianate identity of the authors of the poems, and of the qaṣba and *khānaqāh* environment in which they were composed, is characteristic of the *Candāyan* and later surviving examples of the genre down to the *Chitrāvalī* of Usman, which dates from the reign of Jahangir (Usman 1981). This effacement is accompanied by a purging from the literary vocabulary of the Persian and Arabic loan-words so commonly used in the “proto-Urdu” dialects, and the deliberate adoption of a “literary” genre in an appropriate dialect refined from the common speech of the people of the countryside among whom the composers of the poems were settled.

The intentionality of these choices of idiom is illustrated by the spelling of Muslim names that occur only in the opening dedicatory portion. This introduction follows the order of Persian *mathnavis*, praising in turn God, the Prophet, the current ruler and a patron. The Creator is hailed by the “modern Indo-Aryan” terms *dhanī* and *sarjanhār*. The ruling monarch is not called Feroz/Firuz Shah but Sah Peroj, described as the “big Raja of Dhilli”; the minister Khan Jahan has lost the foreign guttural fricative of the initial *kh*; and the Sufi guide Shaykh Zaynuddin (Zayn al-Din) has become Jainuddi (Dalmai 1996: 39-45). This is a process of personal literary identification, of indigenization. The poet is an educated Muslim, possibly—as we examine below—from an esteemed and courtly social background and a lineage honored in the Islamic world. There is no doubt that he could spell these names in a “correct” fashion, but Mawlana Da’ud has chosen to do so in a manner that reflects the illiterate pronunciation current in the rural environment of Awadh to which he was himself adapting.

The greater extent and voluntary nature of these adaptations can be illustrated by comparison with an emerging tradition of vernacular poetry in the Deccan in the fifteenth century (discussed above, pp. 328-33) and in particular by a

late as the sixteenth century, mainly derived from Taranatha’s hagiographies (Templeman 1983: 82-101). In that text there are references dateable to the sixteenth century to encounters with Mukundarama of Katak, Ramachandra and Balabhadra (Virabhadra) of Bandhugarh, Pandit Madhusudan at Varanasi, and a shadow artist projecting images of Humayun and Akbar at Mathura.

⁷³ If there were predecessors in the genre of the Awadhi *premākhyān*, neither the texts themselves nor literary mention of them has survived. Regarding the *Candāyan* the survival of so many manuscripts (unfortunately none of them complete) and the references to the poem in Indo-Persian sources show the popularity that it enjoyed.

comparison with the choices made in Nizami Dakani's *Kadam Rāo Padam Rāo*. In that poem the few common Perso-Arabic lexical items that occur are usually spelled in their "correct" orthography, as are Muslim names in particular. A more decisive choice is that of the meter which follows "the Hindi system of prosody" and is in a form of stanzas consisting of four *caupāis* (more correctly *dvipada*) followed by a *dohā* (Kellogg 1938: 574-5, paras. 980, 982). We have seen that Nizami Dakani's poem is in the *mutaqārib* meter often used in Persian verse, particularly in narrative *mathnavīs* (Gladwin 1798: 138). The *Candāyan* and the *premākhyāns* that followed it, written by Musalmans in Awadh, mark the emergence of perhaps the most prevalent and enduring genre of modern north Indian narrative poetry, above all represented by the *Rāmacaritamānasa* of Tulsi Das.

The immediate historical environment in which this striking literary tradition emerged was the provincialization that occurred in the last decades of the greater Dehli Sultanate. The links between the Muslims in the Awadh countryside and metropolis of Dehli were not yet broken, even though a move towards a new integration with the local environment had appeared amid these remote colonists. Mawlana Da'ud at Dalmau, as he acknowledged in his prologue, was a disciple of Shaykh Zayn al-Din, nephew and inheritor of a large portion of the authority of Shaykh Nasir al-Din Mahmud Chishti, "the Lamp of Dehli" (*Chirāgh-i Dehlī*). The latter retained his connection with the Awadh countryside and continued to visit his home after he had taken up residence in Dehli. It is likely that Mawlana Da'ud had passed time in Dehli, and that he had met the younger Khwaja-i Jahan, wazir of Firuz Shah Tughluq. A possible identification of the author suggests that he had access to high courtly and Sufi circles in Dehli, and was himself the ancestor of an influential Chishti lineage in Awadh.

The latest editor of the *Candāyan*, M. Ansarullah proposes the identity of Mawlana Da'ud with Shaykh Da'ud, who was the grandfather of the important Chishti Sabiri Shaykh Ahmad 'Abd al-Haqq. Upon Ansarullah's inquiries this suggestion has found support among that Shaykh's descendants at his tomb in Rudawli. The preacher (*wā'iz*) Taqi al-Din, who—according to Badayuni, a late sixteenth-century source (Badayuni 1898: vol. 1, 333)—"used to read his verses from the *minbar* (pulpit) of a mosque" would then have been another grandson of Shaykh Da'ud, Taqi al-Din who was the elder brother of Shaykh Ahmad 'Abd al-Haqq (Dalmai 1996: 11-13).

There are some weak points in this identification. The proposition that the author of the *Candāyan* was the same Da'ud as the grandfather of Ahmad 'Abd al-Haqq imposes no chronological difficulty. But the same Da'ud in the source quoted is said to have fled from Balkh in the time of "Hulagu" (not later than

1265),⁷⁴ and also to have received lands in Rudawli in the reign of ‘Ala’ al-Din Khalji (r. 1295-1316). If he fled from Balkh in the time of “Hulagu,” his age would have been not less than 120 years when he composed the *Candāyan*. Another difficulty is that Dalmau is perhaps 80 or 90 kilometers southwest of Rudawli. There is also a problem of whence Badayuni, writing a couple of centuries later, derived this information about the preacher Taqi al-Din reciting the poem in a mosque.

Though Ansarullah quotes the family tree from a nineteenth-century composition, it can be traced through seventeenth-century intermediaries to a biographical *tadhkira* regarding Shaykh Ahmad ‘Abd al-Haqq of Rudawli, *Anwār al-‘Uyūn*, probably composed a few years before 1491 (Ghulam Sarwar 1914: vol. 1, 386; ‘Abd al-Rahman Chishti 1997: 1140-41; ‘Abd al-Quddus Gangohi 1295/1878: 120-21; see Digby 1975: 9, 15-16 and n. 88). This passage by ‘Abd al-Quddus, while it does not provide complete proof of the identity of Mawlana Da‘ud at Dalmau with Shaykh Da‘ud of Rudawli, corrects some impossibilities in the subsequent transmissions and provides details which strengthen the case for the identification.

Sultan ‘Ala al-Din Khalji, who bestowed the land at Rudawli, is referred to in the earlier account of the ancestry of the family at Rudawli reproduced by ‘Abd al-Quddus as Sultan ‘Ala’ al-Din Balkhi. This is an easy and obvious error of transcription, the two words *balkhī* and *khaljī* being of similar shape. The error must have had an earlier documentary source, as it has also affected ‘Abd al-Quddus’s narration. With regard to ancestry he also mentions the descent of the family from the caliph ‘Umar Faruq, but then mentions that “some of the men of the tribe” (*chand az mardum-i qabīla*) in the disaster of Hulaku—a general Indian term for the Mongol attacks—had the honor to come from the *wilāyat* of Balkh to the realm of Hindostan.⁷⁵ ‘Abd al-Quddus states that—“having come forward with mighty honour”—Sultan ‘Ala’ al-Din (Khalji/“Balkhi”) made worthy provision for (their) family “in the name of the *šubadār* of Awadh.” They took up residence (*sakūnat ikhtiyār farmūdand*) in the qaṣba of Rudawli.

This passage is susceptible of fairly precise interpretation by those familiar with the semiotic gradations of Sufi hagiographical writings, which are often de-

⁷⁴ The Ilkhan Hulegu reigned in Iran but not in Balkh. The tradition evidently could have conflated Hulegu with a contemporary among the descendants of Chaghatay, either Qara Hulegu or Alughu, both of whom ruled from Transoxania.

⁷⁵ The statement that Shaykh Da‘ud himself fled from Balkh at this time is a misunderstanding of the passage by later seventeenth-century transmitters.

signed to mislead the inattentive reader but will also in a circumlocutory way often indicate the actual situation. The word *qabila* used for the immediate ancestors of Shaykh Da'ud suggests their employment as soldiers rather than professional holy men. As such they were sent by the Sultan to the province of Awadh, with notification sent to the local governor (possibly based at the city of Awadh/Ayodhya). This notification assigned a land-grant for them and their households at Rudawli.⁷⁶ Given that Sultan 'Ala al-Din died in January 1316, if we wish to identify Shaykh Da'ud of the Rudawli family as the author of the *Candāyan*, we are now relieved of the necessity of believing that he completed the poem in extreme old age.

'Abd al-Quddus also gives items of information regarding Shaykh Da'ud. That "mighty man of distinguished lineage" had professed discipleship (*irādat*) to Shaykh Nasir al-Din "Chiragh-i Dehli" and had been taught and educated by the Shaykh (*ta'lim u tarbiyat . . . ḥāṣil namūda*); but he had kept his spiritual state concealed in the clothes of worldly people (*ahl-i ṣūrat*). His blessed tomb, which was extremely modest (*bī-ghāyat gharibāna*), was in the direction (*janib*) of Rudawli. From this description we may postulate that Shaykh Da'ud's way of living and livelihood was not that of a recognized Sufi holy man. He had professed discipleship to a great figure in the Chishti lineage of Sufi Shaykhs of Dehli (cf. the soldiers sent to Chanderi, see above). He had received miscellaneous teaching in Shaykh Nasir al-Din's *dargāh*.⁷⁷ This would entitle him to be called Mawlana. A significant omission is the lack of a mention of *khlāfat* or *tabarrukāt* that he might have received from the "Lamp of Dehli" as an emblem of spiritual authority. Dalmau was a military checkpost of importance, and given the suggested profession of older members of his family, it is likely that he was a soldier or garrison-official there. This would not have interfered with the family's tenure of lands at Rudawli. (The *Candāyan* has vigorous descriptions of battles, weapons and military animals.) There may be a deliberate ambiguity in 'Abd al-Quddus's statement that his tomb was "in the direction" of Rudawli—perhaps intending to imply it was in the locality without telling a lie. Shaykh Nasir al-Din Chiragh-i Dehli died in 1357. Da'ud followed the practice of the *mathnavīs* in recalling in the poem a living holy man, his nephew and heir at the tomb, Shaykh Zayn al-Din.

⁷⁶ The scenario that the passage is possibly meant to suggest to the inattentive reader is that Shaykh Da'ud came from Central Asia as holy man and was received with appropriate honor by Sultan 'Ala' al-Din Khalji. This was how it was taken by 'Abd al-Rahman Chishti and later hagiographers.

⁷⁷ Compare the general instruction imparted to the youths Akhi Siraj and Amir Khwurd at Nizam al-Din's *dargāh*.

These coincidences would suggest the identity of Shaykh Da'ud of Rudawli with Mawlana Da'ud of Dalmao. There is a further correspondence of names that would suggest that the preacher Taqi al-Din (mentioned by Badayuni) who recited the *Candāyan* in a mosque was a grandson of the poet. This would be another example of the numerous links between the capital city of Dehli and the Awadh countryside in the late fourteenth century.

'Abd al-Quddus states that the elder grandson of Shaykh Da'ud named Taqi al-Din was a (non-Sufi) 'ālim who had moved from Rudawli to reside in Dehli. There he moved in respectable Muslim circles and may have had charge of a mosque ('Abd al-Quddus Gangohi 1295/1878: 11-15). An anecdote depicts Taqi al-Din lying down in the mosque, with his younger brother 'Abd al-Haqq massaging his legs. At that moment 'Abd al-Haqq's boyhood friend arrived, who was a *shāhzāda* (Prince, evidently of the Tughluq house). Given that Ahmad 'Abd al-Haqq was a boy of marriageable age when he stayed with Taqi al-Din in Dehli, and died as an influential Sufi Shaykh in 833/1429-30, Taqi al-Din would have been reciting his grandfather's poem very shortly after the date of its completion. Given the family background of Badayuni himself, with numerous north Indian 'ālim and Sufi connections, it is not improbable that an anecdote of Taqi al-Din reciting Da'ud's poem at a mosque (in Dehli, from other evidence) could have been transmitted to him from some unidentified written or oral source.

Further coincidences seem to strengthen the plausibility of the identification. The *dargāh* at Rudawli in the course of the fifteenth century was permeated by a tradition of Sufi/Yogic eastern Hindi poetry, exemplified by *dohās* and *chaupāis* of Shaykh 'Arif (son of Ahmad 'Abd al-Haqq), Shaykh Piyare and 'Abd al-Quddus (Digby 1975: 8, 59-65). It is likely that there was also a manuscript of the *Candāyan* there from which 'Abd al-Quddus began to translate the poem into Persian verse, an early example of another literary genre that was to enjoy popularity for several centuries (Digby 1975: 55).

In the late fourteenth century, communications between the settlements in Awadh and the capital city remained close and personal movement between the two areas was frequent. There do not appear to have been serious problems of mutual intelligibility between those who spoke (or at any rate wrote in) the new literary language and the speakers of the western "proto-Urdu" dialects of capital city or the Deccan. Two of the fragments of illustrated manuscripts of the *Candāyan* may plausibly be assigned to Malwa (which is outside the area of Awadhi speech) and to an early sixteenth-century date.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ The Bharat Kala Bhavan folios and the Berlin (former Tübingen) Ms may plausibly be

Around the date of the composition of the *Candāyan* and for a few years longer there was a considerable Awadhi or “Hindustani” presence in the capital city and in the towns of the Panjab. From the time of their rise to the throne in 1321, the Tughluq dynasty had difficulties in getting their authority accepted in the capital city. Among the inhabitants of the city were the ancient élite households established since the previous century, which are called by Barani *khaylkhānahā-yi buzurg*. The problem was one of the factors that had led Muhammad. b. Tughluq to his ill-judged attempt to transfer the capital to Daulatabad in the Deccan. The solution adopted by Feroz Shah Tughluq was to revive the slave-household of many thousands of royal *mamlūks*, which had been disbanded when the Khalji dynasty attained power more than half a century before. Feroz Shah could draw on the services of these royal slaves for administrative and military tasks as well as for profitable activities in industrial *kārkhānas*. These *bandagān-i ferozshāhī*, though called the “Turkish Amirs” (*umarāʾ-i atrāk*) by one source fond of the ceremonial of the Tughluq dynasty (Bihamad Khani Ms, f. 425v and elsewhere), are firmly designated the “Hindustanis” by the other near-contemporary source (Sihirindi 1931: 150). A predominance of these slaves, who had been captured or sold in youth, must have been from the vicinity of Awadh. The Sultan Feroz Shah could govern by a dividing the fruits of office and by balancing the slave party against the free (*aṣīl*) inhabitants of the city; but the situation degenerated when the Sultan sank into senility. After his death in 1390, there was a contest for the succession.⁷⁹

A conflict of interest between immigrant Awadhis and the old inhabitants of the city and of neighboring *qaṣbas* led to a disastrous incident. The free population of the city turned against the slaves. Those slaves who did not flee from Delhi in three days of grace given to them were hunted down and massacred. Among the slaves were great Amirs who had houses in the Sultan’s garden city

assigned to Jawnpur; there is no consensus among art-historians about the center of production of the Lahore and Delhi National Museum leaves in a “Caurapancasika” style. Among those who reject the exclusive Mewar attribution of Barrett and Gray, are Motichandra, Ehnbohm and Topsfield (Barrett and Gray 1963: 67-68; Khandalavala and Motichandra 1969: 64-85; Daniel Ehnbohm, unpublished thesis on *Bhāgavata Purāna*, University of Chicago; Topsfield 2001: 35-9; Digby 2004). I have recorded murals in this style as far east as Rohtas. The study of a random sample of the texts of these illustrated manuscripts seemed to indicate there is no correlation between the families of manuscripts and the links in the styles of painting. All of them are in a crude Indian variant of *naskh* script with some influence of *bihārī* which can be assigned to the fifteenth or early sixteenth century. Other manuscripts in a similar hand include the Jawnpur anthology, closely dateable to around 1460 and the unique Sultanate-period manual of accounting at Rampur.

⁷⁹ The two sources are not in agreement as to the exact sequence of events (Digby 1971: 76-7).

of Firuzabad. The massacre was repeated by the free populations of the qaṣbas of the Panjab. It is significant that a linguistic shibboleth was used in this genocide of the easterners, who were identified by their inability to pronounce the flapped *r* in the phrase *kharākharī* (Sihrindi 1931: 150-51).

Legacy

We have now reached the terminal date of our survey, and can only indicate briefly the historical and literary legacy of the eastern settlements in Awadh. Mawlana Daʿūd’s *Candāyan*, a poem which came into being with no known close literary antecedents, established a genre of composition which flourished through the next two centuries and has left a permanent mark on North Indian sensibilities. The series of major narrative *premākhyāns* by Muslim authors writing in Awadhi continues with the *Miragāvatī* of Qutban (1503), the *Padmāvatī* of Jayasi (1540), the *Madhūmālātī* of Manjhan (1545), and the *Citrāvalī* of Usman/ʿUthman (1613). All these poems appear to have been written in the Arabic script and have a similar metrical structure of stanzas of four, five or seven *chaupāis* followed by a *dohā* (cf. Behl and Weightman in Manjhan 2000: xlvii; McGregor 1984: 27). All these poets had allegiances to Sufi Pirs, and all were suffused with symbolic parallels between human and divine love.

Sufi religious motivation and symbolism is not absent in Daʿūd’s *Candāyan*, but it attains a greater intensity in the later poems. A change is also visible in the “matter” of the poems. While Daʿūd drew upon the heroic oral epic tradition of the marginal community of Ahirs/Abhiras, the later poets have reverted to the more general (or pan-Indian, “cosmopolitan”) pool of “folklore” motifs of adventures of wandering princes who attain their *princesse lointaine*. Jayasi is exceptional in blending this with a quasi-historical theme of Rajput chivalry, the siege of Chitawr at which the enemy is Sultan ‘Ala’ al-Din Khalji of Dehli.

Of the early poets using this idiom, all were Muslims from Awadh or Bihar. Two of them, Qutban and Manjhan, enjoyed support at the courts of Sultans, and the latter was a Sufi Pir of some distinction and political ambitions (Manjhan 2000: xx-xxiii). Usman was from Ghazipur, a great center of weaving. His accurate knowledge of distant areas of India including Gujarat suggests that he was a travelling cloth-merchant. He was the first north Indian writer to mention the ocean-going ships of the English and Dutch (Usman 1981: 101-2).⁸⁰

The case of Malik Muhammad Jayasi is of interest. He was born in 900/1495 (*Akhīri kalām* in Jayasi 1962: 644). His title of Malik at this period probably still indicated a military/administrative officer. Like Mawlana Daʿūd he exhibits

⁸⁰ For *balandip*, read *valandij* (i.e., “hollanders”).

a detailed familiarity with the panoply of warfare. Tradition records that he had social connections with a local Hindu Raja at Amethi, which is close to Jayas (Jayasi, tr. Shirreff 1944: v). His own poems, as well as local tradition, suggest significant links with the fourteenth-century pattern of settlement.

Jayasi, with the avoidance—characteristic of this school of Muslim Awadhi poets—of non-Indian loan words, conveys a body of Sufi-tinged Islamic doctrine regarding the Unity of God, His motives for creating the world and the *nūr-i Muḥammadi*. With this is combined a complete acceptance of Nathapanthi Yogic physiological teachings of the path to mastery and ecstasy. As in the case of the *Candāyan* and its possible connection with the settlement of Rudawli, coincidental evidence suggests that the literary impulse towards the composition of the *Candāyan* may be a direct inheritance from the strategies of Shaykh Ashraf Jahangir when he founded the settlement at the *khānaqāh* of Kichhawchha.

Ashraf Jahangir is one of the two Pirs recalled by Jayasi in the prologue of *Padmāvatī*. “Sayyid Ashraf, beloved Pir, who gave light to my path He is Jahangir Chishti, without stain like the moon.” The poet Jayasi from praise of the Shaykh passes on to praise of the Shaykh’s “house” (*ghar*) and remarks: “In his house there was a spotless jewel, Hajji Shaykh by name. In his house were two bright lights, whom God created to show the way,—Shaykh Mubarak glorious like a full moon, and Shaykh Kamal spotless in the world” (Jayasi 1955: 18; 1944: 15). The poet also invoked Sayyid Jahangir in an earlier short poem describing the Last Judgement (*Akhīri Kalām*): “In the whole world the Creator placed him as a lamp . . . In that house (*ghar*) I am a Murid and he the Pir” (Jayasi 1962: 645).

The hometown of the poet Malik Muhammad retained a connection with Ashraf Jahangir. He had been active in Jayas and made 2,000 or 3,000 murids there before passing onto Kichhauchha (Yamani, *Lindesiana* Ms: f. 321B). The *khānaqā* that he founded at Jayas, embellished with a stone the Shaykh himself had brought from Makka, is still maintained by *khādims* and retains its links with Kichhauchha (visited by the author in 2004).

As we have seen above, Ashraf Jahangir did not drive the Jogis away from the site at Kichhauchha where he founded his *khānaqāh* in the late fourteenth century. It is also recorded that Ashraf Jahangir later dispatched Kamal Jogi, the companion of his later Middle Eastern travels, to Jayas in his old age (see below). We have noted above Jayasi’s mention of Shaykh Kamal. Kamal Jogi is likely to be identical with Shaykh Kamal who is buried near Jayas and is mentioned by the poet. He was also called Pandit Kamal by local people of Jayas: “The tomb of Shaikh Kamal, one of Jaisi’s spiritual ancestors, on the outskirts of Jais, is locally known as Pandit Kamal’s tomb” (Jayasi 1944: vi).

In the *Latā'if-i ashrafi* by Nizam Yamani, Kamal Jogi is described with the unusual epithets *jāmi'-i riyāzat-i shadīda u ṣāhib-i mu'āmala-i jadīda*, which perhaps can be translated as “a combiner of severe disciplines and possessor of a new business.” These epithets suggest that the contemporary hagiographer acknowledged that Kamal Jogi added progress on the Sufi Path to a previous mastery of Yogic techniques. He tells us that on this account and for his service to Ashraf Jahangir during his travels and his sojourns he was granted the cloak of devotion (*khirqā-i irādat*, the shade of meaning is that he was not a major heir of the Shaykh's authority) and a license (*ijāza*, “to depart and act as a Sufi Shaykh”). He was then given spiritual charge of the town of Jais (Yamani, *Lindesiana* Ms: f. 301). Here we have an obvious source for the tradition of the doctrinal fusion of Muslim faith and Yogic physiological concepts that Malik Muhammad Jayasi displays.

The literary tradition of the Awadhi *premākhyāns* had come into being with startling suddenness as a result of the eastward migration of Muslim settlers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and the establishment of their settlements in the area. A time came when they attained a wide non-Muslim currency and their unique innovative quality had passed. The period from the late sixteenth to the early nineteenth century saw a flowering of many other genres of pre-modern Hindi poetry. The readership and audience for the *premākhyāns* had been extended not merely to Vaisnava bhaktas, but into the common “cosmopolitan” milieu and melange of north Indian society. Evidence of this and of conditions for their oral recitation and chanting survives in the verse autobiography of the Jain Banarasi Das, called *Ardhakathānaka* (“Half a Lifetime's Story”). According to his own account in his youth Banarasi Das was singularly incompetent and unsuccessful as a trader. Around 1610, Banarasi Das was separated from his family and found himself in Agra, where the last of his resources ran out (Banarasi Das [c. 1981]: 249, dohās 335-6):

Then I sat in my house, not going to the business of the bazaar. There are two fine books (called) Madhumalati and Miragavati which I read aloud at night time (and) ten or twenty men would come. I would sing and I would talk, and always rise up to greet (people).⁸¹

Banarasi Das had family connections with Jawnpur. However a growing taste for these eastern *premākhyāns* would explain Nagari script manuscripts of them in Rajasthani collections, and the new popularity of a similar genre of verse

⁸¹ My own translation.

narratives of the adventures of princes-errant in Marwari/Gujarati by Jaina authors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Motichandra and Shah 1975: 35-37, 99-103).

The language, narrative technique and meter of the *premākhyāns* were adopted and adapted in the most famous and best beloved of all Hindi poems, the *Rāmacaritamānasa* ("The Holy Lake of the Acts of Rama") of Tulsi Das, composition of which was begun by the poet in 1575. Thus a tradition of expression initiated by Muslim settlers in Awadh passed into the center of north Indian Vaisnava devotionism.

Sherani, from his own pejorative point of view, found this a cause for the decline of the *premākhyān* tradition:

Qutban, Malik Muhammad Jayasi and Usman Ghazipuri by writing compositions in the popular taste set Hindi poets on the highroad to universal acceptance;⁸² but it is a matter of regret that subsequent Hindu poets, imbued [the genre] with a sectarian colour. Tulsi Das and Sur Das confined [the genre] to the narrow field of religious belief and appropriated it to tales of the deeds of Krishan [Kṛṣṇa] and Ramchandar [Ramacandra]. The poets who came later were mostly Hindus and followed their footsteps.

In criticism of Sherani's statement one may observe that the composition of Usman's *Citrāvali* was in fact about three and a half decades after to that of the *Rāmacaritamānasa* of Tulsi Das. The *Citrāvali* is a poem that in every respect stands comparison with those of Usman's Awadhi Muslim predecessors. Poets of Muslim origin have continued to write verse down to the present day in North Indian "Hindi" genres and verse-forms, often permeated with the sentiments of *nṛguna* or *saguna bhakti*. One need but mention the dohās of 'Abd al-Rahim Khankhanan and the Braj poems of Ras Khan (R. Snell 1989: 29-37; 1991: 63, 110-21). Awadhi *premākhyāns* of note continued to be composed through the seventeenth and subsequent centuries (Behl n.d.: 4).

Let us end with a more generous view than Sherani's of the influence of the literary tradition of the Awadhi Muslim *premākhyāns* that had come into being with the eastward migration of Muslim settlers of the thirteenth and fourteenth

⁸² Sherani knew of Mawlana Da'ud's *Candāyan* from the folios (illustrated in a Mandu? style), which were then in the possession of a family in Bhopal, and are now mostly in the former Prince of Wales Museum (now Chatrapati Shivaji Samgrahalaya) in Bombay/Mumbai (Khandalavala and Motichandra 1969: pls. 24-5, figs. 156-75). These he confused the smaller number of folios (illustrated in a Jawnpur style?) which at partition were divided between the National Museum at New Delhi and the Lahore Museum (Ashton 1947: no 399, 109-10, pls. A and 82).

centuries, and the establishment of their settlements in Awadh. In December 2003 at New Delhi, at the close of a seminar on “how bhakti became a movement” Aditya Behl gave a response concerning “presence and absence in bhakti.”⁸³ Earlier speakers had often alluded to the traditional view that a seminal influence came from south to north India in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, associated with the name and tradition of Ramananda. Behl, alluding to the “complex and multi-layered universe” of Indian religions with constant reformulations, showed the immediate ancestry of evocative descriptions in the *Rāmacaritamānasa* of Tulsi Das in similar evocations by the poets of earlier Awadhi *premākhyāns*, whose environment we have discussed. From their imagery a strand had entered the common climate of religious and aesthetic sensibility of northern India and merged with the continuous indigenous tradition, and used the simile of the junction (*saṅgam*) of two sacred rivers. Taking his cue from the name of the masterpiece of Tulsi Das and comparing his description of the holy lake Mansarovar with those of his predecessors Shaykh Qutban and Shaykh Manjhan, Behl concluded: “Both the Ganga and the Jamuna flow at the heart of this Manasarovara.”

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⁸³ Held at the Indian International Centre, Lodi Road, New Delhi.

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